

# ALL IN THE DAY'S WORK

WILLIAM BLACK CREIGHTON





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BRIEF ESSAYS *for* BUSY PEOPLE



WILLIAM BLACK CREIGHTON

*Editor "The Christian Guardian"*

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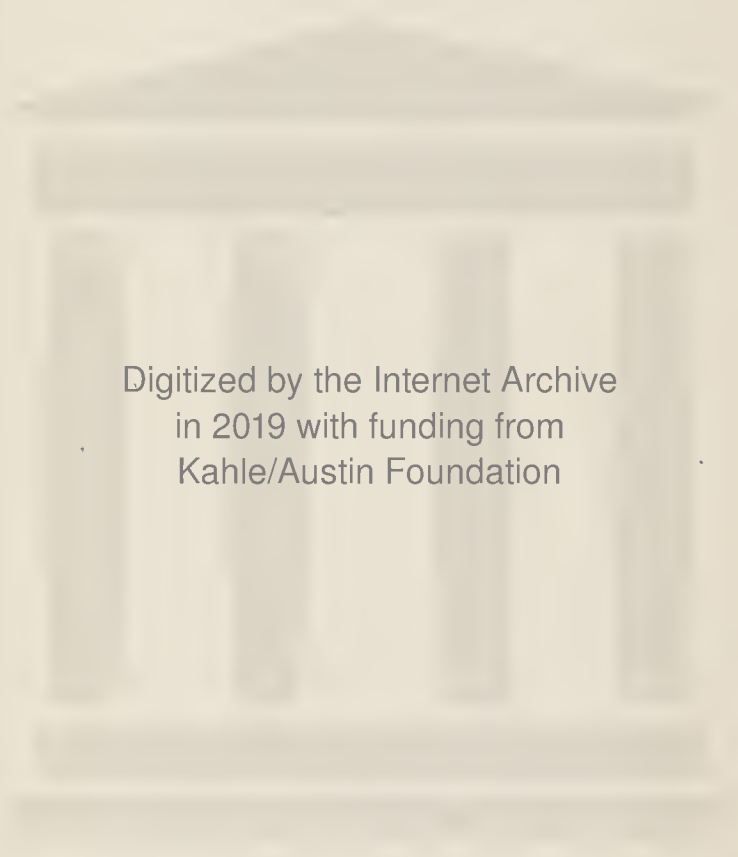
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To  
MY WIFE  
Whose companionship has so  
often made lightsome  
the Day's Work

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## PREFACE

IT IS a poor excuse, but it may be better than none. For many years now there has appeared on the cover page of each week's issue of *The Christian Guardian* a brief message which many of the readers of that journal have said gave them some courage and inspiration for the day's work. For many months also the writer of those messages furnished for a syndicate of daily papers what was rather inelegantly called a "tabloid sermon."

He has often been urged to put into book form a selection from these two somewhat similar writings. Up till the present he has refused to be lured into such an undertaking, but at last he has allowed the plea that such a collection of writings might help some folks a little to weigh with him. That plea probably contains an exaggerated statement, and furnishes a very poor excuse. But what man is there of us whose vanity may not be appealed to in some way!

Many of the little essays appearing in this volume owe their inspiration to some brief passage of Scripture. Their author for years has had the habit of carrying around in his thought some such brief passage as a kind of motto or suggestion for the day. He has found such habit very inspiring and helpful, and it has led him to the decision to precede each essay on the printed page with an appropriate verse of Scripture.

Little snatches of verse have also been proved to be, through many years, very stimulating and inspiring daily companions. To enjoy poetry one has to live with it, and it is really remarkable how rich our English

## PREFACE

language is in little gems of verse that come home in a wonderfully companionable way to the everyday lives of everyday people. The little bits of verse appended to the essays published within are for the most part from living, or at least very recent writers, and each one is intended to fit into the thought of the writing that precedes it.

Should the essays in this volume not prove of any great or inspiring interest, at least the Scripture selections and poetry can be very highly and earnestly commended.

W. B. CREIGHTON

ALL IN THE DAY'S WORK





# JANUARY

## THE MONTH OF BEGINNINGS

*Sweet is the lingering look on tasted joys;  
And blessed the heart that holds those joys  
divine,  
That keeps its childhood faith through life's  
annoys.*

*So would I dream of vanished years of mine,  
Yet wistful stretch my eager hands to greet  
This glad New Year that comes on shining feet*

—MARGARET CABLE BREWSTER



*Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

—2 Peter 3: 13

## THE LAND OF BEGINNING AGAIN

THE poet sighs, "I wish that there were some wonderful place, called the Land of Beginning Again." Well, there is; I know that there is, because I have found it. And I think that it ought to be specially easy for any one of us to find it on this opening day of the new year. And of all the wonderful gifts that God has given unto men that privilege of being able to come into that land of marvellous opportunity is the very choicest. It ought, perhaps, to be said that it is not always an easy land to come to; it takes a good deal of courage and determination and perseverance before a man arrives. He must have courage to forget some things, and a will resolute enough to plan and purpose better things. Nevertheless every man, woman and child in all the world may come. God in heaven has set no restriction to that statement. Perhaps it ought also to be said that some of us may have to carry a few handicaps with us as we come. There are handicaps of race and creed, ignorance and weakness, folly and sin. Yet here again there is much hope, for heaven seems to have a special love for people with handicaps, and a special mission for helping them. Why not every one of us come to that land to-day!

---

To every man there openeth  
A Way, and Ways, and a Way.  
And the High Soul climbs the High Way,  
And the Low Soul gropes the Low,  
And in between, on the misty flats,  
The rest drift to and fro.  
But to every man there openeth  
A High Way, and a Low  
And every man decideth  
The Way his Soul shall go.

—JOHN OXENHAM

*Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.*

—John 4: 34

## THE UNFINISHED TASK

THE old year passed from us and left us with a great multitude of unfinished tasks upon our hands. And in that it was very much like other years, and indeed like life itself, which seems always to stand like a half-built house against the sky. But what a challenge there is in that. While life lasts life's tasks are never done, but lie about our way at every turn; but in that there is not discouragement, but incentive. It is so easy to take them up, so easy to set them forward a little, so easy to co-operate with the Providence who never gives us anything ready-made, but calls us constantly to the job of finishing what has been begun. There are so many good things to be done this year, so many that need doing badly and that you and I can help in accomplishing, that there isn't one of us but can fill up every day and every hour with work that will count, and count mightily for all the years to come. Shall we do it? Or shall we let life slip by carelessly and leave the unfinished task lying neglected at our feet? In view of the many pressing calls and wonderful opportunities, that were surely unworthy of us. And in view of the fact, also, that no one else can surely be expected to take up the work that we ought to do, neglect and failure would seem to be unpardonable. Let us begin this day to set that unfinished task forward.

---

To each man is given a day and his work for the day;  
And once, and no more, he is given to travel this way.  
And woe if he flies from the task, whatever the odds;  
For the task is appointed to him on the scroll of the gods.

Yes, the task that is given to each man no other can do;  
So your work is awaiting; it has waited through ages for you.  
And now you appear; and the Hushed Ones are turning their gaze  
To see what you do with your chance in the chamber of days.

—EDWIN MARKHAM



*Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward.*

—Hebrews 10: 35

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS

WE ought to greet the New Year with a smile. Nothing else would seem to be appropriate. Fear for what it may bring or vain regret for what we have left behind, are both alike useless and hurtful. To make this year more like last ought to have been we will need courage and hopefulness, and a smile goes well with either. One thing the matter with our past year has been that we have drawn the corners of our mouth down too much, have had too little faith and expectation and high hope. If we face the future to-day, faint-heartedly, fearfully, fretfully, we mortgage its possibilities very seriously. If we are not first of all convinced that something noble and worth while is possible in our own life then it is not possible, for vision must precede realization, and nothing comes to the man who is expecting nothing, notwithstanding what old saws may say. If we face the New Year with optimism, and cheerful, hopeful expectation we are better ready for it than if we faced it in any other way. Whatever it may prove to be in reality, without our faith in it, and courage for it, it cannot be anything at all that is worth while.

---

Earth giveth unto us  
Another year  
Miraculous  
Her beauty to behold,  
New dawns of rose and gold,  
New starlights to enfold  
Our dreaming sphere.

Love giveth unto us  
Another year  
Of marvellous  
Ointments for weary feet,  
A shadow from the heat,  
Home welcomes and hearth-sweet  
Communion dear.

Christ giveth unto us  
Another year  
Of burdenous  
Tasks blessed for His sake,  
World's pity to awake,  
To bind up hearts that break  
Beside us here.

Hope giveth unto us  
Another year  
Adventurous  
To follow the climbing Good,  
By thorn and beast withstood,  
To heights of brotherhood,  
Through dim to clear.

—KATHERINE LEE BATES

*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

—*Philippians 4: 8*

## A WORRY BOOK

A CLEVER magazine writer suggests it to us, and his idea is a splendid one. He tells us to get a blank book and write down in it to-day everything we are worrying about. We can keep the habit up as long as we like but we musn't turn back to look over any page we have written until the ink has been dry a week or two, or perhaps longer. And then we may make the very interesting experiment of seeing what a page of worries reads like in the light of the weeks that have gone by since they bothered us. It is really a fine idea, that any one of us can carry out, and that would probably do many of us good. If it doesn't reveal to us the fact that ninety per cent. of our anxieties had no foundation and ought never to have been harbored, then I am greatly mistaken. Of course, without the help of any book we can pretty nearly decide that. Why, some of the most amusing incidents that we can think of in all our past lives were things that at the time we nearly worried ourselves sick over. I know there will always be something for us to worry our souls about, and we will keep at it to some extent as long as we live. But we ought to cut out as much as we can, and then there will be plenty left. By all means get a worry book if it will help any to get out of the worry habit.

---

Let us forget the things that vexed and tried us,  
The worrying things that caused our souls to fret,  
The hopes that, cherished long, were still denied us—  
Let us forget.

Whatever things were good, and true and gracious,  
Whate'er of right has triumphed over wrong,  
What love of God or man has rendered precious,  
Let us remember long.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh.*

—Isaiah 21: 11, 12

## AND ALSO THE MORNING

TENNYSON in his "In Memoriam" speaks of the possibility of being able to "reach a hand through time to catch the far-off interest of tears," but he hints that it is not an easy thing to do sometimes. And indeed it is not an easy thing, but it is a possible one nevertheless, possible only as a great many other hard things are possible, through the faith and far-seeing vision of the man who absolutely believes in God. Tears may water the seed that will yield a rich harvest of gladness in the days that are to come; bread that is cast upon the flood may be found after many days; a man may drop his grain into the furrow with an almost breaking heart, but the day will come when he will carry his golden sheaves with a carolling harvest-home song upon his lips. And to see through the gloom the joy that is coming, to see in the loss a gain that will more than match it, that's what it is to be a Christian. And the world never needed the enterprising, far-seeing, eager souls who can display such Christianity more than it does to-day. And I suppose that it never was more the duty of Christian people to show that phase and aspect of their religion than at this very moment. That gift of being able to reach a hand through time and lay hold on the wonderful realities toward which the world is coming is a gift indeed.

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Thank God! there is always a Land of Beyond,  
For us who are true to the trail;  
A vision to seek, a beckoning peak,  
A farness that never will fail;  
A pride in our soul that mocks at a goal,  
A manhood that irks at a bond,  
And try as we will, unattainable still  
Behold it, our Land of Beyond.

—ROBERT SERVICE

*So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

—*Psalm 103: 5*

## ON KEEPING YOUTHFUL

A WELL-KNOWN biographer, in sketching the life of a famous statesman and diplomat, makes the emphatic statement that the characteristic in his subject that made him the beloved of his friends and that gave to his career a large amount of its steadiness and power, was "the eternal boy in him." Even down to grey hairs he absolutely refused to grow old, but persisted in maintaining toward all of life the fresh and untouched attitude and outlook of a youngster. There may be some folk ready to question the philosophy lying back of such a statement, but there have been more than this one illustration to attest its soundness. The youthful mind is the mind to which everything is still new and unspoiled. The boy's world is a world in which anything may happen, a world of infinite possibilities, a world where the best is always ahead, and in which anything great and glorious may come to pass just around the corner. The man of the youthful heart puts the boy's zest and enthusiasm into living, and is never guilty of that crowning sin of growing years, living too much in the past. Surely he must keep alive in his life the power that makes great and beautiful things possible. That eternal spirit of youth is worth cherishing.

---

They who can smile when others hate,  
Nor bind the heart with frosts of fate,  
Their feet will go with laughter bold  
The green roads of the Never-Old.

They who can let the spirit shine  
And keep the heart a lighted shrine,  
Their feet will glide with fire-of-gold  
The green roads of the Never-Old.

They who can put the self aside  
And in Love's saddle leap and ride,  
Their eyes will see the gates unfold  
The green roads of the Never-Old.

—EDWIN MARKHAM

*And this, knowing the season, that now it is high time for you to awake out of sleep.*

—Romans 13: 11

## MAKING TO-MORROW COUNT

HOW would it be if you and I would determine that we will begin to-day to be and to do the fine and worthy and really splendid thing we are sure we are going to be and do some day? It looks this morning as if it perhaps would be much easier and more likely the day after to-morrow, but the trouble is that it has looked that way before, when to-day was a to-morrow a long way off. While we have been dreaming and thinking and planning to-morrows many have passed over into yesterdays and our fine achievement still waits. It isn't that we haven't had ideals, or that we would not like to measure up to them, or that we do not fully intend to do so. We have had good desires and good purposes by the wagon-load. But what we have lacked is the courage to start in *NOW* to carry them out. The poet, as poets often do, gives us good advice:

Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute;

What you can do, or dream you can, begin it!

Boldness has genius, power, magic in it!

Only engage, and then the mind grows heated;

Begin it, and the work will be completed.

If we lose to-day the chances are that it will be the same old story to-morrow, and then the day after to-morrow may not be any better. But if we begin to-day—well, at least we will have begun, and sometimes that means everything.

We shall do so much in the years to come,

But what have we done to-day?

We shall give our gold in a princely sum,

But what did we give to-day?

We shall lift the heart and dry the tear,

We shall plant a hope in the place of fear,

We shall speak the words of love and cheer,

But what did we speak to-day?

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN



*For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.*  
*—Ecclesiastes 5: 20*

## TIME WRITING HIS WRINKLES

BYRON reminds us very beautifully that time writes no wrinkles on the azure brow of the ocean, but can we say that there is any other brow anywhere upon which he does not place his tell-tale marks? We look into the glass with a close scrutiny some day and the face that greets us there shows unmistakable signs of his passing. And yet we wonder if it is quite right to blame all that we see in the glass on Time, when we think of the needless worry and fret with which we crowd our lives. But the brow of a man's soul—is it not possible to keep it free from the furrows and scars and wrinkles that are left elsewhere? Even if we have to allow that the weight of the years and the years' cares and responsibilities and disappointments must bend down the frame a little, and take from the step something of its elasticity, might we not hope that the soul would be able to keep young and fresh and buoyant through all the years? And if we could manage to keep the soul young, why need we care what else may happen? And if we could learn the secret of how that could be done would it not be one of the finest lessons that we had learned all our life through? I am very sure that it can be done, for I have known some people to do it, just ordinary people, too. And I know that a young, fresh, buoyant soul is very good to see.

---

"Have I not bored your teeth," said Time,  
 "Until they drop out, one by one:  
 I'll turn your black hairs into white,  
 And pluck them when the change is done:  
 The clothes you put away with care,  
 My worm's already in their seams—"  
 "Time, hold your tongue, for man can still  
 Defy you with his worm-proof dreams."  
—W. H. DAVIES

*Everlasting Joy shall be unto them.*

—Isaiah 61: 7

## ON ENTERTAINING JOY

SOME one has written a beautiful little poem on the privilege that is ours of so entertaining Joy in the heart and life that she will be compelled to stay and make herself a life-long companion and friend. It is a very pretty thought, but, like some other pretty thoughts it may not be so very easy to live up to. What kind of house, indeed, must that heart be in which this rare and beautiful guest can make her permanent home? It will have, first of all, to be an honest heart, for honesty, surely, must be the very foundation of the house in which Joy would live. And it must certainly be a kindly heart, one across whose threshold no envious or jealous or spiteful thoughts are given any right of way. And it will also have to be an aspiring heart, where no sordid ambitions are cherished, where the things that are lovely in thought and hope and deed are dwelt upon, a heart into which little children may come and where all bright and beautiful things will feel at home, and carping care can find no place. If we could grow such a heart as that, there would be no doubt but that joy would come and live with us for ever. But can we do it? Well if we cannot quite, I know of Some One who will give us just the help that we need. In fact He has a great gift for that one special thing—making honest, kindly, unselfish, aspiring human hearts.

---

I entertain my Joy in my heart's best room,  
 With posies on the window sill and lights against the gloom;  
 I keep my windows shining, I make my garden gay—  
 Oh, well-beloved guest of mine, long may you stay!

I entertain my Joy with all the care I know,  
 That she may love my house too much to turn and go,  
 For of all sad places the saddest one to-day  
 Is where Joy stayed a little while—and yawned and went away.

—THEODOSIA GARRISON

*But one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal.*

—*Philippians 3: 13, 14,*

## THE SPRINGS OF ETERNAL YOUTH

IT is a pretty sure sign that you are beginning to get old when you talk and think more about the things you have done than you do about the things you are going to do. Of course you may not have so very many years behind you, but you are beginning to get old just the same. And you don't really need to get old after that fashion either; it is very much a matter of your own doing. You remember how it was with that wonderful old man of the New Testament Scriptures. He had a record of many splendid and heroic deeds behind him when he was shut up in the Mamertime prison at three score and ten, but he doesn't talk about any one of them. That was not his habit; indeed his habit was of a quite contrary kind. And in that habit lies the secret of eternal youth. Of course a man cannot do at seventy the things he could do at twenty, but he ought to be able to do things that are better worth doing. An octogenarian isn't likely to cut a very good figure in a foot race, but then a foot race, though interesting enough, isn't really a very great enterprise. The things a man can do at eighty are bigger things and better things than that same man could do at eighteen. It is always possible for us to do something worth while to-day and to plan for something better worth while for to-morrow, and if we can do that we can keep young for ever.

---

Time at my elbow plucks me sore;  
Yet I'll not slack my pace to hear  
The one sad word which, o'er and o'er,  
He whispers in my ear.

Upon my hair he dusts his rime;  
I shake my head full laughingly,  
For howsoever fleet be Time,  
He shall not outstrip me.

—JAMES B. KENYON

*In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.*

—Isaiah 30: 15

## MAKING THE BIG NOISE

YES, keeping on doing the same old things in the same old humdrum way does get a bit tiresome. But then if it is your job to do them, and they can't be done in any other way, perhaps you had better think a while before you break loose and attempt something new and sensational. The temptation to get tired and try some more rapid and short-cut method for the doing of work that takes patience and care, comes to all men in every calling. The preacher who finds the work of building up the City of Truth a brick at a time pretty slow business, sometimes starts in for sensational "stunts" and is amazed to find how suddenly he has got the crowd and his own name in the papers. But if he doesn't forget about that City of Truth it will come back to him soon that his real work requires patience and faithfulness more than it requires anything else. Cheap things can be done by cheap and easy methods, but the things that endure must be wrought by enduring spirits. Mushrooms spring up over night, but you don't grow oak trees that way. The man who is the big noise is usually not very much else. Or if the enterprise that he is connected with is worth anything and is making progress, it is generally not because of him but because of some others behind the scenes whose work is done in quietness and patience. Humdrum obscurity may be tiresome, but often it is useful at least. Notoriety generally hasn't even that virtue.

Seek not afar for beauty. Lo! it  
glows  
In dew-wet grasses all about  
thy feet;  
In birds, in sunshine, childish  
faces sweet,  
In stars, and mountain summits  
topped with snows.

In wonder-workings, or some  
bush aflame,  
Men look for God, and fancy  
him concealed;  
But in earth's common things  
he stands revealed  
While grass and flowers and  
stars spell out his name.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.*

—2 Corinthians 9: 2

## THE USES OF ADVERSITY

A DIFFICULT and taxing job that must be done; a long and arduous way over which one must travel; responsibilities that try and burden and weary almost beyond endurance—these are not all to be set down as afflictions to be escaped from and avoided in all legitimate or illegitimate ways. Through all the centuries of human history there has not been found any way of growing strong, brave, patient men and women save by their doing hard jobs and going long, rough journeys, and carrying reasonably heavy loads. To insist that none of these must be for us, often is deliberately to shut a door of providence in our own face, a door that would have opened up for us something altogether satisfying and worth while. Of course, hard work tires, but it helps to make fibre and muscle, both of body and soul. Of course, care and anxiety wear one down a little, but these may be the very things out of which a man will build up in his own life poise, and patience, and endurance, and courage, than which, surely, there can be nothing finer or more splendid. To run away from hard things is cowardly, but it may also be very foolish.

---

Do not complain, then, of thy destiny,  
Since what there is of the divine in thee  
Only through it can rise into the light.  
Bear, if thou hast the courage, with a smile  
The life that the great Artist all the while  
Is carving, with his chisel-strokes of might.

What matter hours that teem with grievous things,  
If every hour into thy budding wings  
Adds one more feather beautiful and free?  
Thou yet shalt see the condor high in air;  
Thou yet shalt see the finished sculpture fair;  
Thou yet shalt see, O spirit, thou shalt see!

—ALICE STONE BLACKWELL  
*Translated from the Spanish*



*I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do.*

—John 17: 4

## GETTING SOMETHING OUT OF IT

A CERTAIN learned judge has been passing around the question among his circle of friends as to whether they would live their life over again just as it had been, with all its mistakes and disappointments and failures, if they had the opportunity. The great majority of the answers, we are told, were in the negative, with a very few somewhat enthusiastic affirmatives. And some have been pointing a rather dismal moral from the incident, telling what a farce and folly our poor human life must be when there are so many people who feel that way about it. But I don't believe these doleful commentators have quite got hold of the thing by the right end. I believe we should all be a great deal happier than we are, and get more fun and solid satisfaction out of life than we do. But, after all, the great test question about my life is not in regard to how much pleasure it gives me. It is rather, how am I coming out of it? Have I succeeded with it in any satisfactory way, so that the character I have achieved through it and the good I have done in it, seem in some degree worth while? The question as to whether I would live my life over again if I had the chance isn't the biggest or best question I can ask about it. It is a much more important matter to ask if I have tried to make the life I have lived count for something.

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If night should come and find me at my toil,  
When all Life's day I had, tho' faintly, wrought,  
And shallow furrows, cleft in stony soil,  
Were all my labor, shall I count it naught

If only one poor gleaner, weak of hand,  
Shall pick a scanty sheaf where I have sown?  
"Nay, for of thee the Master doth demand  
Thy work: the harvest rests with Him alone."

—LIEUT.-COL. JOHN MCCRAE

*He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds.*

—2 Samuel 23: 4

## THE MORNING COMETH

217.5  
THE poets of all nations since ever the world began have stood in awe and wonder before that greatest of all earthly events, the dawning of a new day. To the old Hebrew poet-prophet there seemed nothing so wonderful and full of meaning in all the world as the coming of the morning. It was like a new and untouched gift fresh from the hand of God, and spoke of the infinite divine goodness that brought out of the death of night the glory and joy of a newly created world. It gave a glad new hope for life; it covered the failure and the folly of all the past with the brightness and joy of a new opportunity. How much poorer our earth would be if life ran on through one long day and there was no sunrise, no far light on the eastern hills, no coming of the morning. And how poor indeed our human life becomes when we shut out of it all faith and hope of the dawning of a new and better day, of a sunrise that gives promise of something finer than the world has yet known. But how steady and brave and strong and hopeful and overcoming that man may be who can say with unquestioning trust, "The morning cometh."

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I want to believe in the happy old way  
That all will come right in the end some day;  
That life will be better and days will be sweet,  
That roses will carpet the world for men's feet,  
That love and affection and honor and trust  
Will lift us from sorrow and shadow and dust.

I want to go toiling with this in my heart,  
That every day brings us the joy of a start  
Fresh with endeavor and duty and truth,  
As we swing to our tasks with the vigor of youth,  
Singing the music of love and of cheer,  
Till clouds drift apart and the storms disappear.

—BALTIMORE SUN

*And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds. —Job 37: 21*

## OPENING THE WINDOW

1/3/25

WHEN we come to think of it, there is so much of good in every day that it does seem too bad that any of us should go around with his eyes shut and his soul closed. Life has its ills and its burdens and its tragedies; and you and I are compelled not only to see them, but to carry our share of them, and at times they do seem to make a grievous and taxing load. And yet there never was a day so cloudy that there was no hint of sunshine in it, there never was a night so dark that there was no sign of a star of hope anywhere, there never yet was any man so encompassed about with care and trouble that he could say that God had left him to himself, or that joy and gladness had flown quite away. And what a pity it would be if we missed the sunlight by staring blankly into the clouds, if we looked so steadfastly at the darkness that we missed the star, if we hugged our care and trouble so closely that they became monster obstacles shutting out God and all the gladness and glory of life. And yet that is exactly what some people, in their great folly and fussiness, do. They miss nearly all the joy and the brightness of life because they are looking so steadfastly at its sorrows and shadows. And I am sure that they ought to reverse the process exactly, make much of life's comforts and joys and as little as they can of its sorrows and cares.

---

So many things, from day to day  
 Spring in our path and hide our way:  
 Such little things 'tis scarce worth while  
 To let them dim our hope or smile;  
 And yet so quickly they increase  
 They threaten all our hoarded peace:  
 Thus little things infest our days,  
 And kill the trustful song we'd raise.

—CLARE SHIPMAN

*He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*

—Matthew 10: 39

## CHRISTIANITY DYING

1/3/25  
IT was said of Christianity's Founder, "He saved others; himself he cannot save." It was said to discredit Him; but the Son of Man never had a finer tribute paid Him than that one. Those who stood about His Cross, saw only a terrible tragedy of loss, but we know that He gloriously saved His life by giving it up. Christianity ought not to be in any way unlike Christ in this regard. Its glory has always been that it has not thought of itself, and when it has most forgotten itself in the abandon of its love and service, it has been most triumphant and successful. It is sometimes hinted to-day that Christianity is dying. Well, we would not be at all surprised if it had some of the genius for dying that its Founder had. And like Him, also, we would expect it to rise, radiant and reborn; to live more gloriously through the years and centuries to come. We are not afraid of Christianity dying; we are more afraid of its not being willing to die, of its forgetting its Master's wonderful secret of saving its life by losing it. And if it ever forgets that, it will cease to be Christianity altogether, for then will the very essence and heart of its Master's life and spirit have gone quite out of it. We talk of the progress of Christianity and try to trace the upward way of its success and victory, but unless that way be marked by Calvarys and renunciations the success and victory will be empty indeed.

I saw a cross of burning gold,  
And jewels glorious to behold;

Over it a crown of thorn,  
Plaited for the people's scorn.

Over it a golden crown—  
All the people falling down.

Cross of gold, no fruit was thine;  
Nothing but the empty shrine.

I saw an ugly cross of wood;  
On it there were stains of blood—

Cross of wood, thou living tree,  
The true vine clung fast to thee.

—MARY E. COLERIDGE

*Behold, I make all things new.*

—Revelation 21: 5

## LIVING TO ONE HUNDRED

13 | 25

THE work never gets all done up. The new day brings its troop of new duties. We can never sit down and feel that all the burdens have fallen from us. Sometimes we get tired of that, but there is quite another side to the matter. If the work never all gets past us, neither do the opportunities; if there are new duties every day, so are there new hopes and new ambitions. Or at least there ought to be. There is no reason in the world why a man should not keep on doing new things, attacking new problems, dreaming new dreams, right up till he is one hundred years old at least. Most of us would easily live that long if we filled up every day with the elixir of something new and fresh and stimulating. But we so easily let ourselves get dull and self-centred and unambitious, and settle down as if there were no new days or rosy dawns or fresh opportunities left anywhere in life. The doctors may say what they like, but the one way to a fresh and happy old age is to keep hopefully, helpfully, enthusiastically busy. And it will help very much if, as life goes on, the tasks and duties and ambitions that fill it are growingly idealistic and unselfish. Sordidness—that is the great foe of the youthful heart.

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|   |   |
|---|---|
| Take, oh take thy tribute, Time;<br>On my forehead sift thy rime; | Touch my brow with magic<br>staff,<br>Scoring there thine epigraph. |
|---|---|

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Bear me downward, if thou must,<br>Slowly toward my kindred dust. | As thou wilt, mar form or face,<br>Only grant a single grace: |
|---|---|

From thy ever-mining tooth  
 Spare, oh spare the heart of youth.

—JAMES B. KENYON



*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.*

—John 4: 34

## THE ART OF BEING A CHRISTIAN

11/2 2 1/2

IT cannot be too strongly or too often said that Jesus did not lay nearly so much emphasis upon how men should think as upon how they should live. Of course He knew, as we ought to know, that thinking greatly affects living, but He did not waste His time elaborating fine theories and involved doctrines, but He did try to get men actually down to the task of right living. And He knew, what we sometimes seem to forget, that right living is an art, and that men learn it by actually trying to do it. He did not teach men merely that they might know, but that they might do, and He was willing to run the risk of their not knowing everything about the right life, and having a perfect philosophy of it, before they began to live it. He seemed to think that men actually might learn to live right somewhat in the way that a carpenter learns to build a house, by handling tools, coming to know how to use them by actual experience, and then putting that practical skill into service according to some finely conceived plan. And it must be that He was right, and that the only way of understanding the Gospel is to be found in the effort to live it. That may be very much harder work than arguing about it, or trying to work out a philosophy of it, but it is also infinitely more important.

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Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,  
 Grant us the strength to labor as we know,  
 Grant us the purpose, ribbed and edged with steel,  
 To strike the blow.

Knowledge we ask not—knowledge thou hast lent—  
 But Lord, the will; there lies our bitter need,  
 Give us to build above the deep intent  
 The deed, the deed.

—JOHN DRINKWATER



*And he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

—Hebrews 11: 8

## THE WAY OF ADVENTURE

THAT may have been a poor joke that was got off on the Methodist people of Canada when they began to talk about organizing a fire insurance society, but just the same it may not hurt even them to be reminded that the religion that they ought to be living out every day is not a religion of safety, but a religion of risk. It is all right to talk once in a while about the security of the Christian's way, but in general it is very much better to think of it as a way of adventure, and to start out upon it thrilled with expectation, and fired with great ambitions, and keen for danger and sacrifice, rather than lulled by a feeling of safety and comforted with thoughts of reward. Getting to heaven is the last thing any healthy Christian ought to be thinking about, not because he is indifferent to the great future that God has planned for him, but because on his way thither he has so many important, heroic and worth-while things to do that his time and thought and soul are full of them. The great thing in the Christian's life is its opportunities, not its rewards. To risk greatly for God and the good is as the very breath of life to him. I wonder how it is that people have occasionally got a quite different thought about Christian people to that. Is it possible that there have been some Christians somewhere who have thought more of safety than they have of adventuring?

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It is glory enough to have shouted the name  
 Of the living God in the teeth of an army of foes;  
 To have thrown all prudence and forethought away  
 And for once to have followed the call of the soul  
 Out into the danger of darkness, of ruin and death.  
 To have counselled with right, not success, for once,  
 Is glory enough for one day.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.*

—Isaiah 30: 21

## START CLIMBING

SO you are in trouble, my friend. You are up against it good and hard. Things have gone wrong; you are in a tight corner, up against the wall, and the wall is desperately high and you can see no way around. What are you going to do about it? You would like some advice? Well, here it is. Don't start in to lie and to cheat your way out. Old John Bunyan found that there was only one way over the Hill Difficulty, and that was the one up its steep side to the top. There is an honorable way out of any fix that a man may get into, and that is the only safe way, and indeed the only way. You say it is hard climbing. Well, what of that. You say you think perhaps you see an easy short cut? Don't believe it. You can sin your way into trouble distressingly easy, but you will never sin your way out. Start climbing. Don't, as you value your life, start in to play the fool just because you are in a fix, or to think that the great eternal principles of right can be made a mock of. Thousands of years of human experience have shown that they cannot, and that record of the centuries is not likely to be broken at this late day. And don't you forget this, when once you have set your foot on that honorable way out of your trouble God himself will stand with you and then everything will become possible.

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When Courage fails and faith burns low,  
And men are timid grown,  
Hold fast thy loyalty, and know  
That truth still moveth on.

Who follow her, though men deride,  
In her strength shall be strong—  
Shall see their shame become their pride  
And share her triumph song.

—F. L. HOSMER

*But joy cometh in the morning.*

—*Psalm 30: 5*

## IN THE MORNING

WHO that has watched anxiously through the long and trying hours of the night has not felt the thrill of hope that comes with the breaking of the day? With the sun new-risen and the birds in every tree, the dark shadows of the mind seem to flit away and the bright expectancy of hope thrills and comforts the soul. Joy cometh in the morning. And how comforting that morning is and how good is the God of all our mercies who grants it unto us. Can we hope that every dark night that visits us with sable fears and sore trials of our faith and trust, will break into glorious dawning, and that eyes that shed bitter tears will greet the sun shining with joy and hope? As God is God and love and light are the habitation of His throne, we may so hope, no matter how dark or fearsome the night may be, or however long the sun may delay his coming. There is no man anywhere in all the universe that God has made but may say, "The morning cometh and the morning always brings its joy."

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Light on the hilltops, dew on the clover;  
 Dawn, and a song in the air;  
 Gold of the buttercups half the world over,  
 And gold in the sheen of her hair;  
 She's coming, she's coming, her footsteps are shaking  
 The gossamer spun from the thorn;  
 She's coming, oh, heart, and the flowers are waking;  
 She's coming and bringing the morn.

Splendor on far peaks, dusk in the valleys;  
 Oh, warder and joy of the day!  
 'Mid opaline shadows the brooklet outsallies;  
 The nest is a-swing on the spray.  
 She's coming, she's coming, her sandals are gleaming  
 Along the waste places of night;  
 She's coming, to waken my soul from its dreaming  
 And drench the new world with delight.

—JAMES B. KENYON

*Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens.*

—Hebrews 11: 33, 34

## THE VENTURE OF FAITH

THE world has got on because men and women have had visions of something new and better, and have risked and ventured their all upon their realization. As they have risked and ventured, in the long last, something new and better has come. Of course it has often taken infinite patience and cost and sacrifice before the consummation was reached, and while it tarried and halted men mocked and said such fine things could never be. But in the end, and after many days, they came. And this has happened so often that it almost looks as if we could set it down as an axiom that every fair, fine thing that men dream of may, perhaps must, one day come true. Just now men are mocking and saying that a League of Nations will not work, that the world will always be afflicted with war, and that the thought of a great universal brotherhood of man is altogether idle and empty. But men have had their vision of these things, and I believe the vision is of God, and that somehow both God and all that is godlike in man is set for their realization. Can such a combination fail? Surely there is no need for it failing, at least.

Fair as a star, rare as a star,  
 The joys of the future lie,  
 To the eyes of a child, to the  
 sighs of a child,  
 Heavenly far and high!

Fair as a dream, rare as a dream,  
 The hopes of a future sure  
 To the wondering child, to the  
 blundering child,  
 Trusting and free and pure!

Fair is the soul, rare is the soul,  
 Who has kept, after youth is past,  
 All the art of the child, all the heart of the child,  
 Holding his faith at last!

—GELETT BURGESS

*Not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time (Margin—buying up the opportunity).*

*—Ephesians 5:15, 16*

## LOCKING THE STABLE DOOR

5/12/25  
**E**VEN if the horse has been stolen it is just as well to lock the stable door; the thief might come back after the harness. It is not often that the whole outfit is taken; it is not often that a man is so completely cleaned out that he hasn't enough left to be worth taking care of. In fact it has sometimes happened that in losing a good deal a man has found wisdom enough to be worth more than he had lost. The situation isn't so irretrievable as it sometimes looks. You turn a corner one of these windy days, your fine hat sails skyward and, thinking of the reeking pavements, you would sell out your interest in the thing for ten cents. But the chances are that the next day you will walk down the street with the same covering on your cranium, feeling quite respectable. Even the mud of a city street can be cleaned off. We have all got enough to be worth saving, enough opportunities to be worth using, even though we've squandered quite a few. And even though we may have to admit that the most that is left to us is the chance of making the best of a bad job, yet even that is well worth doing, indeed it has often turned out much more fruitfully than more likely prospects have. Don't be discouraged. History is full of the wonderful story of what has been achieved with just what was left.

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They do me wrong who say I come no more,  
When once I knock and fail to find you in;  
For every day I stand outside your door  
And bid you wake and rise to fight and win.

Wail not for precious chances passed away;  
Weep not for golden ages on the wane;  
Each night I burn the records of the day;  
At sunrise every soul is born again.

—JUDGE WALTER MALONE



*I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.*  
—Ecclesiastes 9: 11

## JUST KEEP GOING ON

“THE race is not to the swift.” It is surely a strange philosophy that substitutes anything for fast running as a qualification for winning a foot race. But it was a wise man who said that, and it is probably true, even though there are times when we scorn and despise such a doctrine. They used to speak of David Livingstone as “the man who would go on.” And it described him very accurately. Like many another man, there were a number of good stopping places in his life, but he never seemed to see them. But men make name and enduring fame for themselves just because they cannot see stopping places, but keep their eyes fixed on the great luring road ahead of them. It is the man who will go on who is going to win the goal, no matter what kind of goal it may be. The pace of the running makes very little difference. The theologians used to talk about the perseverance of the saints, and it wasn’t a bad subject to talk about, just as perseverance is not a bad quality for a saint to have. Probably there are not very many saints made without its help. That is probably one of the great reasons why we have so few saints. And really we oughtn’t to allow the so-called sinners the exclusive use of many of these fine words. And I know that there are quite a few persevering sinners.

---

I “*will to desire*”—  
 I wish to will!  
*This is the only way*  
*Up the hill.*

The one foot forward  
 Keeps time, keeps time,  
 To the tune of the will  
 For the upward climb.

I “*will to desire*”—  
 I wish to will!  
*There is no other road*  
*Up the hill.*

The air grows clearer;  
 The brain works fast.  
 I shall gain the summit  
 At last, at last!

—MARY STEWART CUTTING



*And when the vessel that he made of the clay was marred in the hand of the potter, he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.*

—Jeremiah 18: 4

## THE GOSPEL OF A SECOND CHANCE

HOW often have you and I heard people say that if they had their lives to live over again they would do very differently at certain points. And, though we could see that they thought they meant what they said, we understood that they didn't mean it very seriously, and that a second chance at life would probably not yield a much better result than the first one had. As a matter of fact, not many of us have made such fatal mistakes in life that we have not had hundreds of second chances of making good on them, and of overcoming very largely the handicap and disadvantage that they brought us. Indeed the pathway of life for every man of us is just strewn with second chances and new opportunities of starting in and making good. There is this to be said, however: a second chance may be a little harder to realize on than a first one would have been. But to say that a thing is hard is not to say anything about its possibility. A first mistake or a first failure may be bad, but it doesn't decide a life unless we let it. In fact I believe that a great many of the finest successes in life have been the result of a realizing on some second or third or forty-second chance that at the time seemed to have very little hopefulness in it.

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The world stands out on either side  
No wider than the heart is wide;  
Above the world is stretched the sky  
No higher than the soul is high.  
The heart can push the sea and land  
Farther away on either hand;  
The soul can split the sky in two,  
And let the face of God shine through.

—EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

*But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

—John 16: 33

## KEEPING UP HEART

A GREAT many people are throwing stones at the optimist these days. They say that he is quite too light-hearted and smiling. They remind him that this is a desperately bad world, and that the unhappiness of it and the sin and wrong in it are past measuring or calculation. And they seem to think that this hopeful and bright-faced individual cannot have been looking things squarely in the face. He must be standing out in the sunlight of favoring conditions and in the broad places of the city of life; he can't have seen the slums, he can't have heard the sighs that come from a thousand breaking human hearts, he can't have looked at the sin that darkens and blackens all. But somehow I cannot forget that the greatest optimist the world has ever had did see and did know. Jesus had more faith and hope in man, and more optimism for the future and the consummation of human life than any man of His time or any man since His time. And yet He knew more of the facts that help to paralyze our faith in humanity than we can possibly know. He had some secret of hopefulness that we, even the most hopeful and courageous of us, have never learned. Well then, surely it cannot be any crime or wrong for us to try to learn it from Him; surely it cannot be any mistake for us to try and see it as He did. No, optimism is no crime and pessimism is no virtue. If we haven't splendid courage and faith and hopefulness for the future we have left the best and the most Christian thing out of our religion.

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I find earth not grey, but rosy;  
 Heaven not grim, but fair of hue.  
 Do I stoop? I pluck a posy!  
 Do I stand and stare? All's blue!

—ROBERT BROWNING(*at seventy*)

*Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*

—Psalm 30: 5

## THE JOY IN THE MORNING

WE are scarcely fair to Providence, now, are we? We speak so often as if the disagreeable, sorrowful, tragic things had a greater facility for happening than the other kinds; but history does not at all bear us out. If we would look over our own lives with any care we would soon see how mistaken our point of view was. Not only have we had many more really pleasant, enjoyable, cheering things happen to us during our lifetime, but even many of those unpleasant, disagreeable, and sad things that came to us had such a way of turning out better than we expected that often we would almost be compelled to count them among our joys rather than among our sorrows. Did you ever really think of the wonderful way that a kindly Providence has of making up to us for the things we have to suffer, and of turning the sharp edge of our sorrow, or even of giving us through it a joy that we could not have in any other way? We have seen people whose care and trouble was so heavy upon them that they seemed to feel that they could never smile again, but it was not so very long till the old smile was back, with just a little added sweetness to it because of what they had been through. No, the days of gloom do not come so very often, and do not last so very long, for the sun has a wonderful way of breaking through in a most unexpected fashion. The winter is soon over; sorrow passes; joy cometh in the morning.

---

There are snowdrops in the grass,  
Squills more blue than any sky.  
Oh, the winter has gone by;  
Shall not sorrow pass?

How can there be grief at all?  
For the opal-crowned spring  
Hither cometh blossoming,  
And the blackbirds call.

—MARY P.    ARS

*Let your forbearance be known unto all men.*

*—Philippians 4: 5*

## CARRYING YOUR UMBRELLA

THE man who carries his umbrella under his arm along crowded city streets or into thronging trolley-cars is likely to do damage to people's eyes or to other portions of their anatomy. You would vote such a man an insufferable nuisance; that is, if you didn't express your disapproval of him in some more drastic way. And yet there are a great many folk who do that very same kind of thing with their opinions. They fairly bristle with views about other people and other people's conduct and the running of the world in general, as if they had an uncompromising alpaca under each arm, and they turn round and move about absolutely regardless of whose hats they knock off or whose ribs they poke. They pride themselves on speaking out their minds; they believe in calling a spade a spade, and this plainness of speech they magnify into a most excellent virtue. But it isn't that, not by a long sight. It is just plain rudeness, inconsiderateness, bad manners. It is all right to speak the truth—when you are speaking. But even though there is truth in the unkind and aggressive thing you are saying, is there any virtue or good or justification in your saying it? As a rule it is better to carry your umbrella, whether literal or figurative, by your side and not poke it into other folk's eyes. It is good manners and I think it is good morals too. And I am sure it is to be commended very much more than that aggressiveness that some people look upon as a great virtue.

---

Think not, because thine inmost heart means well,  
Thou hast the freedom of rude speech; sweet words  
Are like the voices of returning birds  
Filling the soul with summer, or a bell  
That calls the weary and the sick to prayer.  
Even as thy thought, so let thy speech be fair.

—ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN

*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. —Matthew 12: 34*

## HIS BIG JOB

6/2/05

THAT strange old mender of kettles and dreamer of dreams, John Bunyan, when he was thrown into Bedford jail for having the temerity to hold convictions of his own, wrote with a sigh that he had "put aside a more serious and important work" to write his "Pilgrim's Progress." But the pamphlets and sermons that he penned with such pious unction and earnest purpose the world has forgotten all about. And it is just as well, for they were hardly worth remembering. But how much poorer would our literature and our whole thinking be without that matchless allegory of Christian and the Wicket Gate, Faithful, and Doubting Castle, and the mighty Apollyon! Yet he apologizes for writing it, because he had done so naturally out of his heart and just to please himself. Strange, isn't it, the judgment of men as to what is important in life. We so easily get to thinking that the solemn and long-faced and self-conscious things that we do are the ones that are especially virtuous and worth while. But often they are scarcely worth doing as compared with some other things. Our laugh, if it is the right kind, will often do the world more good than our praying will, especially if the latter have just a little too much self-consciousness to it. The thing about my friend that is gone that I remember clearest and most helpfully is his sunny smile. That seemed to be so much a part of himself; many other things were just things that he did. The goodness that is quiet and natural is the kind I like most of all.

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I need not shout my faith. Thrice eloquent  
 Are quiet trees and the green, listening sod;  
 Hushed are the stars, whose power is never spent;  
 The hills are mute; yet how they speak of God.

—CHARLES HANSON TOWNE



*Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.*

—1 Kings 8: 18

## THE REDEEMING PURPOSE

5/3/25  
 "WHAT I desired to be and was not, comforts me." So says the poet. But what sort of philosophy is there at the bottom of such a saying. Does he mean to tell us that he finds a peculiar satisfaction in his failures to realize the dreams and hopes and ambitions of his life? No, not that, but rather this, that he did find much comfort in the fact that he had dreamed and hoped and striven. His life, he had to admit, was a rather poor performance, but at least he was glad that he had never willingly and weakly acquiesced in the pooriness of it. He had dreamed and he had hoped and he had tried, and in that he finds great satisfaction and great comfort. And it was that fact of his trying, of his desiring, of his reaching out after the better thing, that transformed an otherwise poor performance and made it glorious and splendid. His life was not to be reckoned by what men could see who looked at it from the outside, but rather by what the keen, yet kindly eye of God could see who searched its high ambition and its holy aim. And as He sees it, surely there are no failures among the men who splendidly try.

Cheer if you will the brave deed done; with laurels the victor crown;  
 But keep one leaf of your wreath of bay for the men who lost and  
 are down—

For they fight in vain for the cankered grain that in blood and  
 tears was sown.

Honor the strong of heart and hand, the sure of will and of sight;  
 But what of the stumbling feet, the eyes that strain in vain for light?  
 Is there no gain for the tears and pain of the men who fell in the  
 fight?

Beaten—baffled—with standards lost—knowing no rallying cry,  
 Struggling still, but with failing strength, while stronger men pass  
 by:—

Keep ye your bays; I give my praise to the men who lose and die.

—NORAH HOLLAND



*Ye did run well; who did hinder you?*

*—Galatians 5: 7*

## DON'T BE A QUITTER

IT is the apostle Paul who holds up that warning record of the early Christians who ran well for a time and then quit, forsooth, because something got in their way. Their type persists to this day. Students who would have become great scholars—but they tired of their books too soon; preachers who would have crowded to the very front in their great and holy calling—but they quit growing too soon and began to fossilize; doctors who would have become stars in their profession—but they lost their high ideals too early in life and became commonplace and unambitious; men and women in all walks and ways of life who would have forged ahead to places of great influence and usefulness—but they hadn't persistence and patience and faithfulness. "Ye were running well," said the apostle. Most anyone can do that for a time. "But who did hinder you?" Well, it doesn't make so much difference who or what it was, the tragic fact is that you quit. And the quitter doesn't get to the goal, no matter how fine his pace was in the early part of the race. And the finer and more difficult the purpose is the more serious and fatal is that slackening of effort and weakening of faith. What couldn't we do if only we stayed with it! Indeed, what might be the end and consummation of our fine striving and effort if we would not slacken in them who can possibly say! It is when we stop and loiter and quit that we spoil things for ourselves and check the great plans and purposes that God has for us. And they are great plans and purposes we may well be sure.

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Somewhere, sometime the glory;  
 Somewhere the Sun.  
 I'll read me on to the end of the story:  
 God's will be done.

—WILSON MACDONALD



## FEBRUARY

### A MONTH WITH THE WISE MAN

*"Wisdom stands ever before the mind of a prudent man, but the eyes of the fool are in the ends of the earth."*

—PROVERBS 17: 24



*Where no oxen are, the crib is clean.*

—Proverbs 14: 4

## THE THINGS THAT COUNT

21/3/25

SO far as we can understand the wise man's argument, it seems to mean that you can't have oxen and a clean stall at the same time. If you will keep oxen you will have to put up with a little litter at least. If you will have healthy, growing, normal boys and girls around your house you can hardly expect always to have dustless floors, spotless tablecloths, and an antimacassar hanging straight on the back of every chair. You must make your choice as to what are to be the important things in your life. Some people actually choose the clean stall and the antimacassars, but you will not be so foolish as that. For could anything be more foolish than that cowardly, fastidious, finnickiness of trying to escape the inconveniences and dangers and troubles of life, no matter at what cost to its worthwhile enterprises and endeavors and achievements? Of course, every position in life has its drawbacks, and every work in life its inconveniences and cares, but the man who insists on trying to escape these most surely misses all the best things that life has. In heaven's name what use is a stall at all if it have no ox in it, or a home without the laughter and rollicking of children! And what use is a finnickiness, fussy, cowardly life that never ventures, and that never achieves anything!

We are the Laodiceans; we know not the ice nor the fire;  
We have never sprung to the edge of doom at the call of a brave desire;  
We have basked in the tepid noon-tides; we have drawn an even breath;  
We have never felt between our lips the savors of life or death.

We are the Laodiceans; we care not for wrong nor right;  
We have no part in a world's defence, no cause for which to fight;  
The fruits of the ground are sweet; we would rest in our garden-places,  
But God himself shall drive us out, between the black star-spaces.  
—MARION COUTHONY SMITH

*A broken spirit who can bear?*

—Proverbs 18: 14

26/2/25

## THE GREAT SPECIALIST

YES, that is it, the burden of all burdens in a world where every man has to carry his load, is that burden of which the old proverb-writer speaks. There are thousands of men here, there, everywhere, with broken health, broken fortunes, broken hopes, but the man of all men to be pitied is the man with the broken spirit. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity." Of course it will, and when the spirit is sound and whole it is very often easy to mend broken fortunes, broken hopes or even broken health. Or if they cannot be mended at least they can be endured. But the broken spirit, who can bear it? And if it cannot be endured, then comes the other question, can it be mended? Is there anyone who has skill sufficient for such a staggering task as that? Not many, surely. But there is One. It is written specially of Him that He was sent to bind up the broken-hearted. And there are some—yes, there are multitudes—who can testify that He has the hand and the heart for just such a job. Men may help a little, but thank God for that wonderful specialist, that mender of broken hearts. How He does it I do not know. But that He does it I know right well. I have seen His work here and there all over the world. Yes, and I have even known of it in a closer and more intimate way than that. He never fails of His task, and when done it is well done. Haven't you come to know Him and His work yet? By all means you should. He is the world's greatest specialist, and there is no case too hard for His skill.

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When the brier closes and the iris flower is furled,  
 And over the edge of the evening the martin knows her nest,  
 I mind me of the little hearts abroad in all the world  
 Who find in Him their rest.

—MARJORIE PICKTHALL



*So shalt thou find favour and good success.*

—Proverbs 3: 4

## THE GOD OF SUCCESS

26/3/25

IT is something of a disturbing thought that there are more failures in life than successes. That is, of course, taking the word in its quite ordinary meaning. Not many men in business build up great enterprises and amass great fortunes. When the exceptional case occurs we never get tired talking about it. Not many students become great scholars, not many doctors add lustre to their profession, not many would-be politicians have their names written in histories. But those who do not can take a grain of comfort to themselves out of the fact that getting one's name in history isn't the only possible compensation for public service, that becoming a great scholar isn't the only reward of study, that the making of a million isn't the only really worthwhile thing a man in business can do. The so-called great successes are not the only possible successes, nor are they always the most enjoyable and satisfactory successes. We may aim at them—perhaps we ought, within reason, to aim at them, but if we miss them we haven't of necessity missed everything, or even the best things. It is just as well to keep that thought somewhere in the back of our head as we pass on through life. Insisting too strongly upon a certain kind of success has made a whole multitude of life failures. And taking what success comes through honest and earnest and faithful work, and being satisfied with that, can never possibly be called failure.

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So to address our spirits to the height,  
 And so attune them to the valiant whole,  
 That the great light be clearer for our light,  
 And the great soul the stronger for our soul;  
 To have done this is to have lived, though fame  
 Remember us with no familiar name.

—ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN

*Drink waters out of thine own cistern.**—Proverbs 5: 15*

## YOUR OWN PUMP

WHAT did the old writer mean by this odd advice? Surely this much at least, that a man ought to have some sources and springs of happiness and satisfaction within himself, and not have to go outside always for the goodness and the joy of life. Going to your neighbor's pump for water is only a make-shift business, and should not, for two or three very good reasons, become a habit. If your well is dirty, it might be cleaned; if it is dry you might be able to dig down to where the living springs are. An old essayist speaks of a "full mind." It is an excellent and refreshing thing to have. With it, and a good conscience, and just a little of the grace of contentment, a man can be reasonably happy anywhere. His own pump is working well, and it reaches down into a delightfully cool and satisfying source of supply. One of the chief reasons why we run all over trying to get pleasure out of things that have very little pleasure in them, is either that our own well is empty, or we haven't learned how to work the pump. "Drink waters out of thine own cistern and running water out of thine own well." Try it. Try thinking a few of your own thoughts; making a few of your own pleasures; working out a few of your own ideas; building up your own philosophy of life. Don't depend so much. Don't let other people map out too many programmes for you; make a few of your own. Don't copy the Joneses; make a few standards yourself. Dig down and find some water in your own well. It will make life vastly more interesting, and very much more useful.

Find thine own voice and utter thine own heart;  
 Be thine own prophet of the misty years;  
 Be more of nature thine and less of art;  
 Keep sweet the fount of laughter and of tears.

—JAMES B. KENYON

*A sound heart is the life of the flesh.*

—Proverbs 14: 30

## "IN THE MIDST OF MY DUMPS"

27 3 25-

YOU don't feel right to-day and the chances are that you will go around "as one in doleful dumps," as the old poet puts it. Don't you do it. It doesn't pay. It isn't healthy, and that look doesn't sit well on your face. And there is no reason for it when you search the matter all through, any more than there is any good in it. That old Scandinavian word "dumps" used to be used in the singular. "He's in a deep dump now." Philologically it is related to our word damp. The modern word "dump" as a place where we throw our rubbish, is very modern indeed. But really you ought to take that very old and very ugly thing, "the dumps," even though it has no philological relation, out to that very modern institution, "the dump," and leave it there for ever. It is the only appropriate place for it. If you find it hard to do, why, make a brave try at it anyway. Don't blacken and spoil a good, God-given day by wearing a scowl on your face and cherishing a cloud in your soul. Chase the bats and owls out of your hair and stand out in the sunlight where heaven can smile on you and its breezes can make your life wholesome and sweet. The damp dumps is no place for you. Why, you are supposed to be a rational being, something of a Christian too, and your black looks and doleful spirits quite belie all that. If there is anything really the matter no help will come from that mood of the soul. And if there isn't anything—which is more than likely—how foolish it all is!

Each fretful line upon your brow,  
Dug by the plow of care,  
Is treason to your pledge of faith  
And satire on your prayer.

—FREDERICK LAWRENCE KNOWLES

*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in baskets of silver.*

—Proverbs 25: 11

## SPEAKING THE FIT WORD

28/2/25  
WE all have our failings and limitations, even the best of us. In fact, that is where the best of us do not differ so very much from the worst of us. When any man comes to me and starts in to tell me about my shortcomings, and about the things I cannot do or be, I feel like breaking in and reminding him at once that I am quite as well informed on that subject as he is. There are a great many things that I cannot do that are worth doing—that is true. But there are some things I can do and do pretty well. I'm strong on some things, and I would a great deal rather that any man would come to me and, forgetting for the time being the things I cannot do, would say to me, "Come, man, there are one or two things you can do better than any man I know of; you ought to do plenty of them." It is all right to know about my failings and weaknesses, but to find out what my strong points are will probably do me much more good. To get my peculiar gifts and adaptations into effective work will be far better than sighing over my limitations. I cannot sing a solo or paint a picture. But, maybe I can paint a house better than any other man in town, or make a piano that the great singer will write a letter about. If you cannot give me the fit word that will help to get me at the things I can do, please do not preach too long a sermon at me about things I cannot. Much criticism is not only useless but positively hurtful, because it discourages folks rather than helps them into the way of better achievement. The fit word is usually the helpful word.

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The ill-timed truth we might have kept—  
 Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung!  
 The word we had not sense to say—  
 Who knows how grandly it had rung!

—E. R. SILL

*Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me.*

—Proverbs 30: 8

## DOING WITHOUT IT

YES, we have to admit it, life has a great many disappointments. There are some things we have been thinking for years we would like to have and we haven't got them yet, and it looks now as if we might never have them. An old-fashioned story tells us of a woman who longed for a silk dress—a reasonable desire surely—all her life, but was never able to get it. But at last she came to the place where she was glad she never had been able, for she felt that, perhaps, the dress itself might have turned out to be a bigger disappointment than the disappointment of doing without it was. We have disappointments but then they are not the greater disappointments we might have had; and our unhappiness and dissatisfaction are not so much due to the fact that we have to get along without things that are necessary to happiness and satisfaction, as they are to the unfortunate and wicked habit we have of dwelling so much upon some little thing we still desire, that we forget all about the many good things we have. Some things we desired we have had to do without; but life can be full and satisfying even without a silk dress, if only we can get our mind off the dress. And it does seem too bad that in so many instances real blessings and comforts are made to be as if they were not just because we are looking so intently for some added good that still eludes us. We ought to pray every day of our lives that God would keep our eyes ever open to see the good that we have.

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Content sat spinning at her door:

And when I asked her where she was before—

“Here all the time,” she said; “I never stirred;

Too eager in your search, you passed me o'er,

And, though I called, you neither saw nor heard.”

—ALFRED AUSTIN



*Say not unto thy neighbor, Go and come again and to-morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.*

—Proverbs 3: 28

## BETTER DO IT NOW

30 31 25  
**R**ATHER quaint, but altogether excellent, advice that the old proverb-maker gives us, if we would only try to live up to it. What a strange facility we have for putting off till the day after to-morrow the good thing we can and ought to do to-day. If somehow we could get just now the reward for all the fine things we are intending to do some day, how rich we would be. If that neighbor could have to-day all the splendid and satisfying things we are going to give him when he comes back again on some to-morrow, he would surely be the happiest and most satisfied man in the world. But so often the to-morrow of our dreams never comes, and the day of our intending still stays ahead of us, even after many days have come and gone. It isn't fair to the world or just to our neighbor to keep too many of our services for it and for him in the future. Some of our dreams ought to be passing over into history to-day, for good intentions will not stay good very long merely as intentions. We have it by us to give to-day. And it will never be better worth giving. Why wait for any to-morrow which may never come? That easy to-morrow has been the snare and stumbling block that has tripped up many a fair and promising life of helpfulness and satisfaction.

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We shall reap such joys in the by and by,

But what have we sown to-day?

We shall build us mansions in the sky,

But what have we built to-day?

'Tis sweet in idle dreams to bask,

But here and now, do we our task?

Yes, this is the thing our souls must ask—

What have we done to-day?

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN



*Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out.*

—Proverbs 26: 20

## PUTTING WOOD ON THE FIRE

20/3/25

AND that is the very best and only satisfactory way of putting out a great many kinds of fires—just don't furnish them with any fuel. I tell you the world of mankind had had a long and fruitful experience of a great many things before the old proverb-maker wrote those words down, following them by the significant application, "and where there is no whisperer, contention ceaseth." If only men and women would learn when not to talk, and especially when not to talk in whispers, we would all be a great deal more comfortable and happy. Many, many times silence is not only golden but the pure gold itself, though, like the gold in some of our pocket-books, it is all too rare. Sometimes it may be necessary to whisper your story, or to go around behind the shed to tell it to your neighbor, but the fact that you are inclined to tell it that way ought to make you a little suspicious of it. If your conscience will allow you to let that yarn about some one else's wrong-doings die, then in the name of comfort and peace and decency, let it die. Your story will probably spread the fire all right, but the chances are not good that the fire will destroy anything that ought to be destroyed, and it is just about sure to destroy some things that are very sacred and good.

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A narrow window may let in the light,  
A tiny star dispel the gloom of night,  
A little deed a mighty wrong set right.

A rose, a-bloom, may make a desert fair,  
A single cloud may darken all the air,  
A spark may kindle ruin and despair.

A smile, and there may be an end to strife;  
A look of love, and Hate may sheathe the knife;  
A word—ah, it may be a word of life!

—FLORENCE EARLE COATES

*The fear of man bringeth a snare.*

—Proverbs 29: 25

## COURAGE OF OUR CONVICTIONS

12/4/25  
**I**T isn't easy, is it, to be always the thing you feel and know you ought to be, out where men are looking at you and talking about you? We did hear the other day of a man who thought he ought to vote a certain way when he was talking to his wife on his own back porch, but who changed his front entirely when some of "the boys" talked it over with him on the street corner. To have the courage of one's convictions is a fine thing and, even with all the changes that have come to the world, to have such still makes big demands upon men. There isn't a man of us but has been tempted sometimes, when some one's eye has fastened on us, to get around behind the duty which we saw to be ours. That wide-open eye was a snare that we found it hard to escape from. But what a fine sense of freedom we had when we dared it and came out and did what we believed to be our duty in the face of all the world. To have the courage of our convictions is not always easy, but it is a splendid achievement all the same and worth paying something for. Certainly it will give us a satisfaction that no playing the coward can ever bring. Of course one can hardly have the courage of his convictions if he has no real convictions. Perhaps that is what is the matter with some of us, we hardly think and feel positive enough about anything, and a laugh is all that is needed to make us wilt.

---

Heed not the voices sneering round you:  
Follow the star that in darkness found you.

Scorn thou the scorn of the world's heart, grudging:  
God is your King—let him do the judging.

Till, when the day breaks over the sea,  
He weighs what the worth of your work shall be.

—LAUCLAN MACLEAN WATT

*If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.*

—Proverbs 24: 10

## THE DAY OF ADVERSITY

OF course any man can hold out in the fair and sunny day when there is nothing to hold out against. It doesn't take much of a sailor to row a boat across the mill-pond. Nearly any kind of a soldier can cut a figure in the procession. But every day isn't fair and sunny, the ocean is not always a mill-pond, and soldiering isn't all dress parade. Somehow we ought to get that iron thought into our minds, that we are just no good at all if we cannot match ourselves somewhat to the difficulties and problems and strenuities of life. The hard fibre in a man's soul is made for resistance and aggression, and the man who allows his to soften down into mere flabbiness is not much of a man, as the old proverb-maker looked at it. What sort of Christian, he would ask if he were living to-day, is that one who falls down before the first big temptation or who runs away from the first hard job given him to do? And he would answer by calling him a little weakling, unworthy of the big, strenuous name of Christian. Fainting in the day of adversity is like failing in a pinch, where much is depending on you and where failure is fatal. Standing up to life; taking its hard knocks with a measure of equanimity; doing its difficult tasks with some courage and determination—these are among the simple duties that come to every man, and to fail of them is to be a weakling, just as the old proverb-maker says.

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Though you be one of the million  
 Hitched to the cart of care,  
 Ride as your own postilion,  
 Driving and drawing fair.  
 What though the road be dreary,  
 Fraught through each mile with guile?  
 What though your eyes be weary?  
 Lift up your face and smile!

—STEPHEN CHALMER

12/4/2

*Let thine eyes look right on, and thine eyelids look straight before thee.*

—Proverbs 4: 25

## GETTING DOWN TO IT

15/4/25  
**T**HAT is, do not be too easily side-tracked. There are a great many somewhat entertaining things along the pathway of life, but you cannot really afford to stop and look at them all. Success, getting on in life in any sphere, depends just about as much upon the things you leave alone as upon the things you give your attention to. There are not many goals that are worth reaching that a man just straggles into. Making life count isn't like a child picking flowers upon a country hillside. No, we have got to get down to it or we will never get it done. And getting down to it implies fixing attention and effort upon a few things and forgetting about many others. It is true that the man who doesn't take a good, reasonable look at and share of the joy and pleasure of life as he goes along is a fool, but the man who doesn't put some fixity of purpose and steadfastness of aim into it might almost be called by a worse name. Going to a show may be useful as a pastime, but it doesn't do to make it the business of life, if you would think to make life amount to anything. To keep the balance true—that is the difficult thing. I am of the opinion, however, that it may be a little better to take life too resolutely and earnestly than not to take it resolutely and earnestly enough. A somewhat narrow life that does one thing well may be a little better than a mere surface life that does nothing at all. Some of the worlds' greatest benefactors have been men who have seen and done one thing.

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In life's small things be resolute and great  
 To keep thy muscles trained: know'st thou when Fate  
 Thy measure takes, or when she'll say to thee,  
 "I find thee worthy; do this deed for me?"

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*He that is of a cheerful heart hath a continual feast.*

—Proverbs 15: 15

15/4/25

## THE CHEERFUL HEART

WHICH, being interpreted, means that life has zest and wholesomeness and satisfaction for the man who looks at it with something of a smile on his face and who enters upon and continues in its duties and opportunities with courage and optimism. Whether life to me is good and joyous and worth while does not depend half so much on what I have in my pocket as it does upon what I have in my heart. If there is sunshine and health there, there will be sunshine and freshness over all my world, no matter indeed what kind of world it may be. And if there isn't sunshine and health there, it will be a dark and uncomfortable world no matter what there is in it. The problem of living happily and satisfactorily is not, therefore, a problem of getting something, but a problem of becoming something. Life will take color and tone not from what I have but from what I am. There are just as many people happy among those who haven't very big bank accounts as there are among the millionaires; just as many who find life a feast among those who eat very frugal fare as among those who luxuriate in over-abundance; just as many happy homes without Persian rugs as with them. Yes, that cheerful heart is just about worth everything else.

Hold fast to joy, my heart;  
 Hold fast to joy!  
 Summer or winter-time,  
 Threatening or bright,  
 God is enfolding thee;  
 Joy is thy right.  
 What, then, is wrong in all this world of ours,  
 Whether the leaves be brown, or gray the flowers—  
 What can annoy?  
 Hold fast to joy, my heart;  
 Hold fast to joy!

—MARY E. ALLBRIGHT



*He that gathereth in summer is a wise son.**—Proverbs 10: 5*

## SEIZE THE DAY

15/4/25  
**T**HERE is pretty nearly one best time for doing everything. The seasons have a way of not waiting for slow or contemplative or lazy people. The man in this country who will not sow his grain until June need hardly expect to reap a bountiful crop just by pushing harvest time on a couple of months. October would make a much more exhilarating harvest month than August, but the man who postpones his reaping till then will probably not have much to reap. And life in the large is very much like that. There are best times for doing many things, and the man who doesn't do them then usually has to be satisfied with a kind of second-best achievement. There have been men who have secured an education after they were twenty-five, but they usually have found it to be an education with handicaps, better than none, but not as good as the best. Youth is the only best time for laying the foundation for such a superstructure. Of course, if we have in this, or in any other way, missed the best, we can hearten ourselves by remembering that there are very many splendid second-bests along the road of life. But we will find that it is very much better to try and take life by the right end as we meet it, than to have to spend so much time and energy trying to make up on lost and squandered opportunities. Serving the day; grasping the opportunity as it first meets us; doing to-day's duty now—that is still wisdom, and it always will be.

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Yield thy poor best and ask not how or why,  
 Lest one day, seeing all about thee spread  
 A mighty crowd and marvellously fed,  
 Thy heart break out into a bitter cry  
 "I might have furnished, I, yes, even I,  
 The two small fishes and the barley bread."

—FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE



*Where there is no vision the people cast off restraint.*

—Proverbs 29: 18

## CASTLES IN SPAIN

15/4/25

THESE are about the only real property some of us have, but those hard-faced individuals who say there is nothing in them make a huge mistake. A practical age is inclined to discount anything as unsubstantial as day-dreaming, but even a practical age may be astray in its judgment of values. You may say that hope is a rather unsubstantial thing; but after all it has worked out more substantial and worth-while results in human life and history than any other instinct. And touch up hope with a little imagination and, lo! you have your castles in Spain. The great thing the matter with some of us to-day is that we have about lost the faculty for seeing visions and dreaming dreams. We have shut ourselves up in the hard and narrow world that is bounded by the things we can touch, until we have come almost to believe that it is the only world there is. But beyond it is a great and beautiful and very much worth-while world, stretching away to an infinite sky-line, that imagination opens up, and life isn't worth much if it is not once in a while brightened by a vision of it. To say that my day-dreams are never realized is not to discredit them. To say that my castles in Spain never turn into choice city mansions in my own home town is not to set them down as valueless. Day-dreaming may be very much worth while, even if one does not always wake from it to find pots of gold in his hands. Day dreamers have sometimes greatly blessed the world. At any rate they have usually been very happy folk, and that is something.

The castles crumbled that I built in Spain;  
But from the ruins I have brought away  
Beauty and charm that fadeless shall remain  
To brighten through the years my cottage grey!

—ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH

*He shall be holden with the cords of his sin.**—Proverbs 5: 22*22/4/25  
WHAT KEEPS US BACK?

THE man who first wrote that down knew life in a wonderful way. It is the wrong things we do and think that tie us all up in knots and hamper and hinder us no matter which way we turn. Occasionally, perhaps more than occasionally, we hear an opposite philosophy expressed. We even have been told of men who were too honest to succeed. Thorough-going integrity has been presented sometimes as a bar and obstacle. But that is devil's doctrine, born not only of a perverse, but of a foolish mind. Honesty and right-mindedness never kept any man back from success, that is any success that was worth trying for. But dishonesty and wrong-mindedness have, times and times without number. It is when we begin to mix up with things morally wrong that we lose the directness, the clear vision, the steady sureness that mean achievement and success. Look life over from what point you will, and you will find that it has been sin that has tripped men up and held them back and spoiled health and happiness and hope. Truly we are holden with the cords of our wrong doings, and our sin is the thing, more than all things else, that has spoiled our lives. And no amount of cleverness will ever enable us to make up on the handicap that sin and wrong cause. The easiest and best way to straighten out the obstacles that hamper and thwart us in our lives is to come back to that way of rightness and integrity and honorable living. Indeed there is no other way. And when men try to persuade you that there is, you can answer that whole millenniums of human history are against them.

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And fierce though the fiends may fight  
 And long though the angels hide,  
 I know that truth and right  
 Have the Universe on their side.

—WASHINGTON GLADDEN

*It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a contentious woman in a wide house.*

—Proverbs 25: 24

## THE WOMAN THOU GAVEST

2 2/4/25

IT is quite evident that the writer of many of the Proverbs did not enjoy the most happy and satisfactory relations with the fair sex. There doesn't seem to be any other way of accounting for the vituperation and bad temper that he shows frequently when referring to it. Was the fault his, or was he the victim? Of course we cannot say, but probably the chances lean as much to the former as to the latter. When a man begins to call a woman names it is a sure sign that, however the case may stand with her, there is something rather serious the matter with him. A contentious woman, we suppose, is a very bad thing, but she is usually a product, and we fancy that in most cases some man has had something to do with making her what she is. To have to live with some men half a life-time would drive a woman to almost anything. We call the woman the real home-maker, but sometimes that is just our masculine way of trying to evade responsibility. If there is anything the matter with the home, or the home atmosphere, the chances are that the blame lies just as much with the man of the house as with the woman. She is generally about as good a home-maker as we let her be. And calling her names is not a good way of convincing folks to the contrary.

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In ancient temples long ago a priestess kept  
 An altar fire alight from year to year;  
 The fires burned on while empires stormed and slept—  
 A little light of faith in ages drear.

Great honor nations paid to her whose care  
 Watched o'er the flame beneath the temple's dome;  
 But greater love for her should we declare  
 Whose dear hands keep alight hearth-fires of home!

—ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH

*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

—Proverbs 4: 23

## THE GOLDEN KEY

IT is very difficult to realize it sometimes, and again it is very hard on our pride to admit it when we do realize it, but it is a fact nevertheless, and a fact that we should let get hold of us, and stay with us—that the joy and happiness and satisfaction and success of our lives depend very much more upon ourselves and the kind of people we are than upon the kind of things that happen to us. It is the kind of will I carry around with me and the attitude of my mind and the temper of my spirit, that decide whether my life shall be happy and hopeful and useful, and not the things that come to me. Given the right kind of will, the sane attitude and the wholesome temper of soul, and I will be able to adjust myself to life with some comfort and satisfaction and make its opportunities count, no matter what its accidents and incidents are. But without these it is absolutely hopeless to attempt to improve the accidents and incidents until they become quite satisfying and fruitful. I myself carry the key of my own happiness and my own destiny, and no one can give it to me or take it away. So that when we are complaining against life in general, and insisting, that it has not been quite fair to us, what we really are doing is calling attention to the fact that we ourselves are not taking hold of it by the right end and have not made of it what we might have done.

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One ship drives east, another drives west,  
While the self-same breezes blow;  
'Tis the set of the sails, and not the gales,  
That bids them where to go.

Like the winds of the air, are the waves of the Fates,  
As we journey along through life;  
'Tis the set of the soul that decides the goal,  
And not the calm or the strife.

—REBECCA R. WILLIAMS

*Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord weigheth the hearts.*

—Proverbs 21: 2

## SOLVING THE PROBLEM

YES, it is so easy to be mistaken. Things are so often not exactly as they seem, and it is so difficult to see down into their true inwardness. How shall we decide which is the right thing for us to do or to think in the midst of all the conflicting plans and policies that present themselves to us? It is not easy, is it? But after all, it is measurably possible. One thing helps very much. When any great problem of duty presents itself to us, if we only had the courage to bring it in out of the great, busy world where men talk and fret, and lay it down in the quiet presence of God, we will see it much more clearly. Shall I vote thus, or so? Well, that is such an important question that it is scarcely safe to answer it where there are too many distracting sounds in our ears. How does the enquiry look when we lay it reverently alongside the great divine thoughts and plans for the saving and redeeming of the world? It is risky to attempt to answer it anywhere else than in that presence. And if we answer it there we will probably not make much of a mistake. And if we are afraid to bring it there then there is something the matter. Of course we are all subject to mistakes, but have you not found that the most serious of these that you have made so far, have been a result of not being quite ready to get light and leading from the one place where these may be best secured.

---

For ever round the Mercy-Seat  
The guiding lights of love shall burn;  
But what if, habit bound, thy feet  
Shall lack the will to turn?  
What if thine eye refuse to see  
Thine ear of Heaven's free welcome fail,  
And thou a willing captive be,  
Thyself thy own dark jail?

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER



*Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left.*

—Proverbs 4: 26, 27

## IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD

11/5/25  
**I**T is a desperate hard job to strike the happy mean. The most of us are inclined to wobble over either to one side or the other in pretty nearly everything we do. If we are careful and saving, almost before we know it, though probably not before our neighbors and friends know it, we go a little too far and become penurious and close fisted. Or if we are inclined to be generous, it is easy to slip over the line too far and become spendthrift and improvident. Industry and hard work are splendid, but there are plenty of men, and more women, who wear themselves out before their time because they don't know how to take things easy once in a while and mix a little laziness and loafing with their work. And then there are some folks—at least I know them, if you don't—who never mix enough hard work with their laziness and loafing. Probably we all know which one of these two faults we think to be the greater, but it is well to remember that they are both faults. In fact there is a whole list of vices that are just virtues carried too far, good habits that have become mischievous and hurtful because pushed to an extreme. It is the very fine art of living to keep one's balance evenly and walk straight along the middle of the King's highway. In putting the matter that way I know I am giving a counsel of perfection that is not easy to follow, but at least it is well for the man who is lost in the woods to know that men in his fix are inclined to keep walking around in a circle rather than to make their way straight out. The happy mean is indeed a great moral achievement.

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In studying life we see this human world  
 Is in three states—of copper, silver, gold;  
 And those who think in silver take the joy;  
 Thinking in copper, gold, the poor and rich  
 Keep mis'ry in too little and too much.

—W. H. DAVIES



*The ear that hearkeneth to the reproof of life shall abide among the wise.*

—Proverbs 15: 31

## WHAT TO DO WITH MISTAKES

11/57-5-

MOST of us wake up once in a while to find that we have made a more or less serious mistake. Sometimes making a mistake is a pretty bad business; but, from the point of view of the man who makes it, the serious side of a mistake is what you do with it after you wake up. Most mistakes involve other and innocent people and the first thing to do is to try, honestly, to estimate how far other people are involved, and courageously to make such reparation as may be. In this connection there may sometimes be a pretty big price to pay for a seemingly small mistake, but we will not get on until we have attempted to pay it. And when we are sorry for our mistake to the extent of trying to atone for it, we next should be sorry to the extent of trying to find out why we made it. There are some animals that you can fool over and over again with the same old trick, but we do not place them among the most intelligent. A man ought to be able to find out why he made a mistake and not be caught in the same old trap more than a dozen times, anyway. Our mistakes may become very profitable, even as they are often very highly paid teachers, or we may be just as foolish after we make them as we were before. And if that is the case, our foolishness has become genuine folly, and foolishness is pardonable; but folly hardly. Yes, there are very few mistakes that are fatal if we handle them properly after we have made them, and learn the lessons that they ought to teach.

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Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,  
Which we ascribe to Heaven; the fatal sky  
Gives us free scope; only, doth backward pull  
Our slow designs, when we ourselves are dull.

—SHAKESPEARE—(*"All's Well that Ends Well"*)

*The way of him that is laden with guilt is exceedingly crooked.*

—Proverbs 21: 8

## THE CROOKED WAY

**E**VEN if it was not so written down in the Book of books, we would find it graven with a pen of brass in the book of human life that the centuries have written. The man who has done wrong has a burden upon his back, and that burden may grow to be so heavy that he will stagger under it as a man would with a load that was more than he could carry. To step forth free, steadfast, untrammelled and brave-hearted, a man must have a good conscience and an honest purpose in his breast and a clean record behind him. If he has, it doesn't make any difference what loads he has to carry, he can walk along a straight and even way. But if he hasn't, well, if he hasn't the old proverb-maker stated the situation without any exaggeration. And if he hasn't it would be an eminently sensible and right thing to try and get them. Men complain of the perverse and crooked ways of life, but we have here an explanation of the perversities and crookednesses that accounts for the majority of them. Life is not a very bad or uneven way, if we keep it a way of righteousness. But if we haven't kept it so? If we haven't that good conscience and clean record—what then? Well there is even a remedy for that situation. There is a way by which a conscience may be made good and a record made clean. I guess you know about it just as well as I do. I am sure that it is a very successful way for I have tried it, and I know of a great many who have done the same. And I am sure that it is the only remedy in the situation.

---

What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted!  
 Thrice is he armed that has his quarrel just;  
 And he but naked, though locked up in steel,  
 Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.

—SHAKESPEARE—(*"Henry VI," Act III, Sc. 2*)

*Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*

*Psalm 112: 6*

## A GRACIOUS IMMORTALITY

THEY have just opened up in Old London the David Copperfield Children's Free Library, the first institution of its kind in the British Isles. It is located at 13 Johnson Street, the boyhood home of Charles Dickens. Could anything be more appropriate than such a spot for such an enterprise! Dickens' own childhood years were cramped and hard, but was there ever a man whose brain and heart thought and planned more beneficently and thoughtfully and kindheartedly for the children than did he? And the memory of him that the world has to-day, and that this institution will help to keep alive for ever, is pre-eminently the memory of a kindly heart that loved children and simple folk, and who longed to do the very best that he could to please and cheer and help them. It is somewhat the fashion now-a-days to speak slightly of the writing of Charles Dickens, and to insist that he has not a permanent place among the creators of immortal literature. No doubt his work is open to criticism, but even if he is not to live as a great classic writer, he will live as a kindly heart, a friend of the children, and of all fresh-hearted people of every age, and that may be a truer and a greater immortality.

---

"Methuselah lived," and this beside,  
 "Nine hundred years and sixty-nine;  
 Had sons and daughters, and he died."  
 The record adds no other line.

Like some huge saurian on the strand  
 Of some far off, oblivious shore,  
 He left these tracks upon the sand  
 Of his long wanderings—nothing more.

But three years, near another sea,  
 One walked whose steps marked every shore;  
 He died, the man of Galilee,  
 And lo! He lives for ever more.

—JOEL SWARTZ

*He also that is slack in his work is brother to him that is a destroyer*  
 —Proverbs 18: 9

## THE SLACKER

11/825  
**I** WONDER if that is true, or if the wise man is here given a little to exaggeration? What he is trying to say is, that it is just about as bad to fail to do a good, right, helpful thing as it is to do a bad and hurtful one. A sin of omission, he thinks, is just about as ill a thing as a sin of commission. Yet, surely that is going too far! But let us look into the matter a little. Here is one man who grows a splendid ten-acre field of wheat and then lets his cattle tramp it down to utter ruin. He is a destroyer, and we cannot describe him with too harsh words. But here is another man who has a splendid ten-acre field, and he is careless and lazy and doesn't grow anything on it. The net result is the same in each case, is it not? We may find it a little harder to understand the first man than the second, but truly they are *brothers* in the sense intended by the proverb-maker. But, forgetting any thought of comparison for the moment, what this old writer does intend to say, with all the force that he can muster, is that to go through life missing opportunities and fine achievements through slackness and indifference, or, to put it a little plainer, sheer laziness, is an awful crime. And he is right. We do not always see it that way but the argument is plain and convincing and there is no escape from the conclusion. Making nothing out of life is surely about as poor as we can do, especially when we remember that it was crowded with opportunities of making much. And the fact that all that is needed to make nothing out of life is just to be "slack" about it doesn't make the crime and folly of it any less.

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Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made  
 By singing "oh, how beautiful!" and sitting in the shade,  
 While better men than we go out and start their working lives  
 At grubbing weeds from gravel paths with broken dinner knives.

—RUDYARD KIPLING

*Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth. —Proverbs 27: 2*

## THE ART OF PRAISING 11/5/25

AND even after you have given that other abundant opportunity, and it never seems to enter his head to do it, still you had better not start in on the job yourself. A word of praise fitly spoken is good, but you ought to be able to do without it, even though you are deserving. As a matter of fact, to be generous and open-hearted in giving praise to others is an art to be cultivated much beyond that of drawing it out of other people for yourself. If you can't praise others, honestly and whole-heartedly, it is a pretty sure sign that there is something egoistic and self-centred about you; while the fact that others do not praise you may be nothing to your discredit at all. And I believe I have noticed sometimes that the man who is very niggardly in giving praise makes it very plain that he can take it in very large and generous doses himself. To be given to praising is a virtue that we do not see any too much of in this self-centred world, but to be given to praise-seeking is a mean little vice that spoils some fine and capable people. By all means let others praise you if it is to be done at all, and don't be guilty of the folly of trying to make good any neglect on their part. Indeed you cannot make good in that way even if you do try, for praise that isn't spontaneous and open-hearted isn't worth anything anyway. To seek it is only to make yourself ridiculous.

---

By thine own soul's law learn to live,  
 And if men thwart thee take no heed,  
 And if men hate thee have no care;  
 Sing thou thy song and do thy deed.  
 Hope thou thy hope and pray thy prayer,  
 And claim no crown they will not give,  
 Nor bays they grudge thee for thy hair.

—PAKENHAM BEATTY



*The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day. Isaiah 38: 19*

## FINDING LIFE FAIR

29/12-  
**L**IFE is a strange, topsy-turvy kind of thing, is it not? Sometimes our most fondly anticipated pleasures prove to be rather hollow and unsatisfactory when we come up to them. And sometimes our finest joys and satisfactions are just stumbled into. And stranger still, sometimes our sorrows and disappointments prove to have a heart of goodness and pleasure and satisfaction in them that makes them prove to be not sorrows and disappointments at all. And with all its strange mixture, its light and shade, its satisfactions and disappointments, do not the most of us find life very good? Somehow, even though it does try us and disappoint us and surprise us in many ways, pleasant and unpleasant, there are so many things that combine to give it zest and variety and a sense of worth-whileness. Old things do not get stale; life doesn't wear out with use; new days have their new joys and satisfactions; last night's sunset had a glory never seen before! Sometimes we talk as if we could suggest many ways in which life might have been made more completely satisfactory, but how idle is such a thought when we look into it a little. Surely that life is so good as it is, is absolute proof that infinite goodness and infinite wisdom are back of it.

---

My garden has roses red,  
 My garden has roses white;  
 But if, when the day is sped,  
 I stand by the gate at night,  
 One fragrance comes, when the day is dead,  
 From my roses white and my roses red.

The roses of joy are red,  
 The roses of pain are white;  
 But I think when the day is sped,  
 And I stand by the gate at night  
 I shall know just this, when the day is dead—  
 That a rose is sweet, be it white or red.

—PERCY AINSWORTH



*Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar with a pestle among bruised corn, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.*

—Proverbs 27: 22

## FOOLING HIMSELF

27/2/25

ACCORDING to that text folly is a somewhat incurable complaint. And probably it is so by reason of the fact that it strikes in after such a deadly fashion. It is a deal easier to fool yourself than it is to fool your neighbor. In fact, it is one of the easiest propositions imaginable, and all sorts of people succeed in doing it in all sorts of way every day. Jones is the hottest politician in town, yet there is no subject he can wax so eloquent over as that of the narrowness and political bigotry of his neighbor, Brown, who happens to be in the other camp. Jones has absolutely persuaded himself that he is the most fair-minded and reasonable man in the world, and that he feels as he does about his party for the very justifiable reason that it is always right. And Brown's crowning sin is that he persists in saying and believing some good things of the party that is all sham and perfidy. Of course, most of Jones' neighbors understand the situation and smile indulgently or are bored decorously. But the great trouble is that some of those same neighbors are fooling themselves about themselves just as Jones is, though it is over a different, and in some cases a very much more serious, matter. It would be an excellent thing if every last man of us would, at least occasionally, get himself out in a good, clear light and look himself over, honestly and carefully, to see where the spots of folly are.

---

Just stand aside and watch yourself go by;  
 Think of yourself as "he" instead of "I."  
 Note closely, as in other men you note,  
 The bad-kneed trousers and the seedy coat.  
 Pick flaws, find fault, forget the man is you,  
 And try to make your estimate ring true.  
 Confront yourself and look you in the eye;  
 Just stand aside and watch yourself go by.

—STRICKLAND GILLIAN

*My son, if sinners entice thee consent thou not.*

—Proverbs 1: 10

### WHAT YOU MAY EXPECT

1/2/15  
**B**UT why not? What is the argument against it? It looks somewhat attractive. And, then, isn't it rather contracting to shut your life in with such strict negations? Why not try the road a distance anyway, so that you will know for yourself more about what it is like? Well, there are two or three good arguments against doing that, and in favour of taking the wise man's advice, absolutely and literally. In the first place, when you start out on that way of sin the chances are not very good that you will get back to your starting point again as clean and sound and well as when you set forth. You may be positive you will, but many others have felt the same way about it and found their expectations fail them sadly. And then the road of sin isn't the free and easy and attractive way that it sometimes looks to be. In reality, though it does sound a bit paradoxical, the only real liberty there is in the world is the liberty to do the right and the good thing. Notwithstanding all appearances and promises the road of sin never yet led out into any broad or beautiful or satisfying way of life. You had better stay by the old admonition. That isn't quite popular teaching in these our times, I believe. Men are very busy urging the rights of liberty, and insisting that people should be allowed to do very much as they like; but it is a philosophy that will be found not to work out well, I am sure.

---

White Captain of my soul, lead on;  
 I follow thee, come dark or dawn.  
 Only vouchsafe three things, I crave:  
 Where terror stalks, help me be brave!  
 Where righteous ones can scarce endure  
 The siren call, help me be pure!  
 Where vows grow dim, and men dare do  
 What once they scorned, help me be true!

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing.*

—Psalm 126: 2

## THE SAVING SENSE OF HUMOR

1/3/25

THE ability to laugh is the one thing that saves this old world of ours from absolute, raving madness. Did you ever try to imagine what life would be without that kindly, sweet, wholesome thing we call humor? How it spreads the darkness of our life over with the bright, warm, generous sunshine; with what magic power does it lift from our shoulders the burden of care and anxiety and worry; and how it sends us forth to cure and heal the bitterness and sadness and strife with which the earth is filled! If a man reckons on doing much good in this world, if he has ambitions to make it a brighter, a happier, a holier place, he must first learn to smile. God never did a better thing for man than when He gave him the power to laugh. The animals can express joy, fear, sympathy, tenderness, affection, but the unique gift of humor was reserved for the crowning work of creation. We may thank God for many things, but we can never thank Him enough for that most generous and kindly of all His gifts that so often turns the current of our dark and moody feeling toward peace and joy and hope.

---

I heard you laugh  
Out in the crowded way,  
And lo, a weary woman stopped to smile,  
A newsboy sold a dozen papers, while  
A straying sunbeam touched your cheek in play;  
I heard you laugh.

I heard you laugh.  
'Twas in a darkened room  
Where pain had made the hours seem drear and long,  
And, lo, the sick-room echoed with a song—  
A breath of spring that lightened all the gloom;  
I heard you laugh.

—JANE MCLEAN



## MARCH

THE MONTH THAT BRINGS THE SPRING

*Ah, March, we know thou art  
Kind-hearted, spite of ugly looks and threats,  
And, out of sight, art nursing April's violets!*

—HELEN HUNT





MARCH 1

11/3/28-

*But if we hope for which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

—Romans 8: 25

## THE SPRING TIME

THE days are growing longer, the sun is getting higher, the spring is coming nearer. As we shiver in the distressing cold these mornings and worry over the shrinking coal-bin or the dwindling wood-pile, it will help a little to remember these things. Almost before we know it the spring breezes will blow and the birds will sing in the budding tree tops. Most of our troubles do not last so very long. Often we scarcely get started grumbling before the change comes, and the sky that suits us so ill is all transformed. In the April sunlight we will find it rather easy to forget how keen and searching February's breezes were, and in the glory of a June morning January will be as if it had never been. If we remember this and let our imagination go ahead of us a little, we can rob our winter of a little of its chill and fierceness. The spring that will be with us in May may come first of all in the quiet faith of our own hearts, bringing the warmth and cheer of hope with it, and making us patient and appreciative. Surely we can learn to wait for these things that it will be so good to have! And surely we can fill the waiting with the joy of anticipation if it have no other joy!

---

There are more lives yet; there are more worlds waiting;  
For the way climbs up to the eldest sun,  
Where the white ones go to their mystic mating,  
And the Holy Will is done.

I shall find you there where our low life heightens—  
Where the door of the wonder again unbars;  
Where the old love lures and the old fire whitens,  
In the stars behind the stars.

As we go star-stilled in the mystic garden  
All the prose of this life runs there to rhyme,  
How eagerly will the poor heart pardon  
All of these hurts of time.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*But there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*

—Proverbs 18: 24

### THIS YOU CAN DO

A GIFTED Christian writer has undertaken to tell the rest of the story of the Prodigal Son. He pictures the younger son going out into the city and finding a boy who was just starting for the far country and winning him back by sympathy and love. After he had won him, this younger son of the parable felt that he had nothing to give and regretted deeply that he had spent his all, but the lad replied, "Thou hast given me everything; for all I had need of was a friend." And are there not thousands upon thousands just like him, and is not the finest and fullest opportunity that comes to any one of us that opportunity of being a friend to men and women just when the one thing they need is a friend? We should not sigh for a mission when there is this thing we can do; this thing more splendid, and more difficult too, than any we will ever undertake; this thing of helping men and women and boys and girls into the ways of noble and high living through the magic door of friendship. That task is worth spending a lifetime at, surely. Why not get busy at it to-day? But do not imagine that the task of being a friend is an altogether easy one, or that it does not make demands upon any one. One cannot be a true friend lightly or easily, but in the dear name of friendship the sacrifice and service demanded are not hard or taxing to render.

---

'Tis the human touch in this world that counts  
The touch of your hand and mine,  
Which means far more to the fainting heart  
Than shelter and bread and wine;  
For shelter is gone when the night is o'er,  
And bread lasts only a day,  
But the touch of the hand and the sound of the voice  
Sing on in the soul away.

—SPENCER M. FREE

*The conies are but a feeble folk.*

*—Proverbs 30: 26*

## WHAT GOD HAS MADE

YES, but what do you know about the conies? We would almost lay a wager that you can scarcely say whether a coney is an animal or a bird. But that isn't so remarkable, for the thing, whatever it was, lived a long time ago and in the far-off land of Palestine. But what do you know about the insects and the birds and the animals that live in your own day, and may be found in multitudes, perhaps, in the very country in which you live? Not very much, you say, because you are not interested. Well, but perhaps you ought to be interested. It is all very interesting, that is certain. One of the most interesting books I have read in many a day was a book about flies, written by the great French naturalist, Fabre. This is a wonderful world that God has made, and it has a multitude of wonderful things in it that most of us know very little about. We can learn something about God through a study of them, and think some of His great and beautiful thoughts over after Him. Why did he make the wing of a tiny insect a thing more beautiful and delicate than any fabric the genius of man ever wove? Do you know? The question is worth dwelling on. It didn't just happen so, surely. That beauty must be in some way the expression of divine thought and purpose. Perhaps it was meant to teach us some lesson, or to bring some wonderful truth or message home to us. Certainly it was not intended that our human eyes should never see that beauty, or that they should not try to understand or appreciate it.

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What gift of God can ever be  
Greater than just the gift to see—  
To see and hear each sound and sight  
That Nature makes for man's delight?

—SAMUEL MINTURN PECK

*And they all with one consent began to make excuse.*

*Luke 14: 18*

## THE EXCUSE-MAKING HABIT

5/3/25  
A POOR excuse is better than none, they say; but I am not sure that there isn't a very bad fallacy lurking in that statement. An excuse of any kind, good or bad, is a very poor affair, and the excuse-making habit is one of the very worst that we can possibly fall into. The trouble is that, after a training in excuse-making, we get so that we cannot tell the difference between an excuse and a reason. In the old fable the man couldn't lend his rope to his neighbor because he was using it to tie up a pile of sand. When challenged with the statement that one couldn't tie sand with a rope, his reply was that you could do almost anything with a rope when you didn't care to lend it. Pretty nearly any kind of an excuse serves, after a while, for not doing the thing that we do not care to do. And to develop a facility for excuse-making is to get into the extremely dangerous habit of shirking responsibility and playing false with the appeals of conscience. No, a poor excuse is better than nothing, and even a seemingly good excuse is likely to have a good deal of sham and sophistry mixed up with it. It is very much better, and very much safer, just to face the music and call our neglect or our failure by its right name. We will not change the fact by glossing it over with fair words. And the glossing-over habit is a hideously dangerous one. Just how dangerous it is one does not always realize until it is too late, and the soul itself is fettered with sham and insincerity.

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And oftentimes excusing of a fault  
Doth make the fault the worse by the excuse,  
As patches, set upon a little breach  
Discredit more in hiding of the fault  
Than did the fault before it was so patched.

—SHAKESPEARE—(*"King John"*)

*Whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men.*

—Colossians 3: 23

## GETTING INTO PRINT

SIR SIDNEY LEE, the editor of the Dictionary of National Biography, tells us that only one person in every four thousand who lives to mature life achieves sufficient distinction to deserve even the briefest record in a biographical dictionary. The hope, therefore, that either you or I, or a host of other just ordinary folk, will ever write our names in that particular hall of fame is not very good. To desire to do it, however, is not so altogether unworthy of us, and we need not flatter ourselves that there is any virtue in our hypocritical assurances that we would not if we could. It is probably because that particular bunch of grapes is very high that we do not care for it. Our ambition is not the very worst thing about most of us. The trouble is, however, that often we are far more ambitious to have our name in the book than we are to do the things that would give it the right to be there, as these are not usually easy things, but demand some courage and patience and several other virtues. And that may be one reason why the dictionary will likely appear without any story of our achievements. After all, this is a rather fair and square old world, and not many people achieve fame just because they think they would like to. And, of course, the man who doesn't achieve it has this satisfaction that even a Dictionary of National Biography does not tell the whole story of fine and distinguished living. And we ought to be able to get a good deal of satisfaction out of that too; that is, if we are really attempting the fine and distinguished living. And if we are not—well, what do we deserve in that case?

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It is not a great thing to have been to Jerusalem;  
But to have lived well is a great thing.

—ERASMUS (*quoted as a saying of St. Jerome*)



*For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,  
and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.*

—Job 14: 7

## IN THE SPRING TIME

6/2/25  
IT is well worth while enduring all the cold and rigor of this northern winter, just to feel the thrill and joy of the coming of the spring. These days we stretch out eager hands towards its coming and long and long for the days of green fields, soft winds and singing birds. And it is coming; nothing will delay it. We feel as confident of that as if we sat in the twilight of a May night listening to the robin's song. And there are some other things in life that are worth waiting for besides spring winds and daffodils; some things that many prophetic fingers are pointing to to-day, and that are coming as surely as God's sun is going to break the bands of winter and give us the bursting buds and the rippling streams. I do not know how many great and glorious springs God is going to surprise us with, but I have the notion that the most wonderful and the most surprising of them all will be when the winter of our earthly life is over and we step into that new spring day of the life which endureth. And it is coming even more surely than that May will follow March. To doubt it would be as great a folly as to say that God had forgotten how to make a spring.

---

All silently, and soft as sleep,  
The snow fell, flake on flake.

Slumber, spent Earth, and dream of flowers  
Till springtime bid you wake.

Again the deadened bough shall bend  
With blooms of sweetest breath.

Oh, miracle of miracles,  
This Life that follows Death!

—THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH



*Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.**1 Corinthians 13: 4*

## YOUR REPUTATION

8/3/25

TAKE reasonable care of it, but do not give too much time or thought to that job. About the best way is to let it take care of itself. If folks throw things at it, let them throw. You can afford to do that, for in the end they will not stick if they don't deserve to. And you can well afford, too, to wait for the end. Life stretches along and everything has a future, and it is vastly more important that you be right in the end than that you seem to men to be right during the process. Though there may be some exceptions, the old proverb-writer did not make any mistake when he said that the end of a thing was better than the beginning. For one thing it is a better test of it. With reputations, as with some other things, you can afford to wait. And while waiting, you ought to be able to keep reasonably sweet and unflustered. And suppose the high-sounding reputation never comes! Well, the record is what you will find your joy in, not what men say about it. The man who keeps his record true can largely forget about the newspapers and the gossips and even the people who dislike to say the kind and generous things that ought to be said oftener than they are.

Long years ago I blazed a trail,  
Through lovely woods unknown till then,  
And marked with cairns of splintered shale,  
A mountain way for other men;

For other men who came and came;  
They trod the path more plain to see;  
They gave my trail another's name,  
And no one speaks or thinks of me.

Another's name my trail may bear,  
But still I keep, in waste and wood,  
My joy because the trail is there;  
My peace because the trail is good.

—ARTHUR GUITERMAN

*The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.*

—Ecclesiastes 5: 12

## A SAVING NECESSITY

8/3/25  
**Y**OU'VE heard of the woman who said that her idea of heaven was a place where you did not have to do anything for ever and for ever. Probably if you had had as much hard and unrelieved drudgery in your life as she had you would feel about it as she did. But really there is nothing that we ever have to do that is as hard on us as doing nothing; that is, if we have to keep it up for any length of time. I have made this discovery, and I dare say you have too, that real happiness and satisfaction are nearly always a rebound from hard work. If a man hasn't had hard and taxing things to do he may be comfortable in an indifferent sort of way, but that is all he can be at best; he'll never know real joy. Happiness likes to see men and women at work; she really loves sweat and weariness and self-sacrifice, and she will not be found in palaces where time is to be killed, or in playhouses where nothing but pleasure is sought; but you'll find her lurking around harvest fields or in factories, or hovering over a piled-up sewing machine or a littered desk. Whatever in all God's world you grumble at, do not grumble because you have to work hard—that's the very biggest blessing you have. If you do not so see it, your philosophy of life needs revising badly. If you are taking work as drudgery then I am afraid that happiness and satisfaction will never be possible for you in this strange old world of ours.

---

This is the gospel of labour, ring it, ye bells of the kirk!  
 The Lord of Love came down from above, to live with the men who work.

This is the rose that He planted, here in the thorn-curst soil:  
 Heaven is blest with perfect rest, but the blessing of Earth is toil.

—HENRY VAN DYKE

*And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum, and The Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.*

—Acts 28: 15

## PUTTING HEART INTO MEN

15/3/28

NO man ought to be guilty of the unspeakable sin of needlessly crushing out the high hopes of any brother man. Life and life's work for any of us require courage, and to take away any man's mettle for the struggle and the task, and give him doubt and hesitation and distrust instead, is to be guilty of a hideous crime. When you are airily flinging out your pessimism, and insisting that this is the devil's world, and that every man has his price, and a pretty cheap one at that, the danger is that someone will half believe you and lose something of his faith and grip upon eternal and abiding things. To inspire a hope in a man, is to do one of the best things you can possibly do for him. To not do this when you can is to miss a great opportunity. To do the opposite of this, and give a man fear for courage, and distrust for faith, is to sin a great sin against human progress and happiness. If you desire to do great things for the world give your life to putting heart into men.

---

The world needs a song—  
 Now sing, if your gift be singing!  
 The world needs a song  
 To set men's pulses ringing.  
 Over the ultimate seas  
 The jubilant strains must carry  
 To lift up the heavy-hearted,  
 So their feet may lag not nor tarry.

The world needs a prayer—  
 Now pray, if your gift be praying!  
 The world needs a prayer  
 That will mean what all are saying:  
 Give us a ray of hope—  
 Something to lessen the sorrow—  
 Faith that it's all for the best,  
 And courage to rise to-morrow.

—JANE PRIEST

*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

—2 Corinthians 4: 6

## KEEPING THE WINDOW OPEN

15/3/20  
**T**HERE has been a great increase in tuberculosis and other diseases throughout many sections of Central Europe, and the doctors have been laying not a little of the blame on the scarcity and high price of window glass. There were many broken windows and great numbers of them were plastered up with mud or too effectually closed in other ways, and the sunshine and air were shut out of homes with very disastrous effects upon the inmates. Of course, the moral is that we ought to let the sunshine into our homes all the time, and fresh air just as often as we can. That is a moral, perhaps, that most of us in this enlightened country think we do not need to have impressed upon us, and yet it may be that we do not fully realize how wide an application the moral has. A man's soul is a kind of house, and it is just as important that its windows should be open to the sunlight of heaven and to the fresh and invigorating breezes of right thinking, high ideals, and unselfish ambitions. To plaster up the windows of the soul with the mud of self-will and ignorance and unworthy self-seeking is to make good health and happy, wholesome living an impossibility. God has a cure for tuberculosis, either of the body or of the soul, if we will open the windows to take it in.

---

Let there be many windows in your soul,  
That all the glory of the Universe  
May beautify it. Not the narrow pane  
Of one poor creed can catch the radiant rays  
That shine from countless sources. Tear away  
The blinds of superstition: let the light  
Pour through fair windows, broad as truth itself  
And high as heaven.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*Believeth all things, hopeth all things.*

—1 Corinthians 13: 7

## OPTIMISM

15/3/25

ALL the best work of the world is done by the optimists. The real achievements are always to the credit of the men and women who move under the impulse of faith and courage and noble enthusiasm. They persist in seeing possibilities where others only see dangers; they see stars in the darkness where others are frightened by bogies and ghostly shadows. Despondency and faint-heartedness and too great discretion are the precursors of defeat and disaster. There is no wisdom in them. The man in the parable who laid his lord's money away in a napkin imagined that he was doing a very shrewd thing, but that was not what the Master said about it. That man was the prince of the pessimists and the curse of pessimism was upon him. Thousands of men in the early centuries looked across the great ocean and saw nothing but a howling waste of waters, but Columbus looked and saw a Continent—and went till he found it. He was the great optimist of his day. And all the real achievers have been of his spirit. Of all the miserable creeds that men have tried to live by the pessimist's is the worst. And yet it sometimes makes a great pretence of wisdom. We are often assured that it is the optimist who foolishly ignores facts and fails to reckon with "situations." But the pessimist's facts are vain imaginings very much more frequently than the optimist's are; and his vision of the future is very much more likely to be astray.

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I do believe  
 That in the day of famine or of feast  
 That one is richest who has sought the least;  
 That, spite of all earth's woes, and tears, and pains,  
 Love is, and reigns;  
 And sunshine through the ages Time doth weave.

—CLARENCE E. FLYNN

*I would thou wert cold or hot.*

—*Revelation 3: 15*

## BLOWING HOT OR COLD

21/3/25  
**I** CONFESS to a very real sense of shock when I read again in the Old Book the other day the words, "I would that thou wert either cold or hot." They seemed to say to me that a hot enthusiasm even in a bad cause was better than no enthusiasm at all. I pondered long to see if it were really true. And I suspect now that it is. That is, on one condition, that the enthusiasm have a little conscience in it. Saul of Tarsus had a passion for the persecution of the Church, but it made him in the end a flaming evangelist for it, while many men of his time with equal ability but without his enthusiasm never became anything. To be honestly enthusiastic over some rather doubtful cause is better than to be complacently agreeable to other altogether worthy ones. Energy and whole-hearted effort have a value of their own and an effect upon character, even apart from the occasion that calls them forth. Better be guilty of making a thousand mistakes through your hot-headed zeal than guilty of the slow suicide of a limp and listless and lukewarm life. Get out and shout and throw up your hat for something, or anything, rather than settle down to insipid nothingness. For if you haven't some enthusiasms your life will be as near nothing as is possible. But if you have—then almost anything is possible.

---

The portals are open; the white road leads  
 Through thicket and garden, o'er stone and sod.  
 On, up! boots and saddle! Give spurs to your steeds;  
 There's a city beleaguered that cries for men's deeds,  
 For the faith that is strong, and the love that is God!  
 On through the dawning! Humanity calls!  
     Life's not a dream in clover!  
     On the walls, on the walls,  
     On the walls and over.

—HERMANN HAGEDORN



*Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden,  
that the spices thereof may flow out.*

—Song of Solomon 4: 15

## WRITING POETRY

DON'T say that I ever advised you to start at it. There are other ways that you may use your time that will yield you larger financial returns. And then you might as well retain the friends you have; if you should start in to read your verses to them the strain upon friendship might be too great. And if you should ever be tempted into sending some of your choicest pieces, beautifully typewritten and tied up with white baby-ribbon, to an editor of a paper, think how you would add to the afflictions of an already much troubled man. But if you don't write poetry on paper, there would be nothing against putting a little of it into your life; in fact you ought to try to do that. We oughtn't to let ourselves develop into dry, juiceless, unsentimental old sticks. We have an imagination, a wonderful, magic gift indeed, and with it we ought to put into life something else beside the things that we can handle and see; we ought to—

“Add the gleam,  
The light that never was on sea or land.”

We complain that life is commonplace and treadmill, when we have it within ourselves to brighten its every hour with the poet-gift of imagination. It is a shame to grow dull and stupid and commonplace. Yes, that book of life of ours has many pages that we might fill with poetry if we would. And surely we ought to.

---

If I must think as others think, in terms of every day,  
I'll hang my little Room of Dreams with arras drab and grey.  
But still a tiny, tended fire  
Of leaping hopes and gay desire  
Shall set the dinginess alight,  
To fold me warm and close at night,  
And shine across the way.

—MARTHA HASKELL CLARK

*But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

—Matthew 10: 30

## PROVIDENCE

11) 3) 25  
MANY of us have had a sad testing of our faith in an overruling and beneficent Providence in these days of sorrow and loss. To hold to our belief that all of life was under God's hand, and that His hand was kind and good, has not been easy in view of all the facts. And yet it may be that we never felt greater need for just such a faith than we have done through these months. Blind fate is such a poor substitute for a friendly, overruling God, that we have felt that life must be infinitely poorer and meaner if we are compelled to accept the one doctrine than if we are able to rise to the height of the other. Well, that gives us our foundation for a belief in Providence. If life loses its dignity and meaning and inspiration by shutting a good God out of it, then surely there is no hard-to-understand circumstance in life that compels us to shut Him out. And when we come to think it all out, we will find that not to believe in Providence is a far more irrational and difficult thing than to believe in Him. Of course that belief in Providence makes problems and difficulties for us. But life will have its problems and difficulties no matter how we think of it. And to think of it all as under the good hand of God is the only way we can think of it and make it seem rational and kindly and divine.

---

Among so many, can he care?  
Can special love be everywhere?  
A myriad homes, a myriad ways,  
And God's eye over every place?  
I asked; my soul bethought of this—  
In just that very place of his  
Where he hath put and keepeth you,  
God hath no other thing to do.

—A. D. T. WHITNEY

*He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.*

—Isaiah 27: 8

## THE WINDS OF MARCH

21/3/25

THEY are cold and blustery, are they not? and sometimes much more wild and wicked than we should like them to be. And yet they do bring the spring, and for that we can forgive them everything. They are not so cruel as they seem, for somehow in their heart there lurks the warmth and geniality and freshness of the spring. They are like some people: they are rather better than they seem. And we find it easy to like people of that type. They may be a little crusty and unattractive on the surface; they may even say a sharp, cross thing at times; but when we find that this surface appearance covers over a heart that is all gold and sunshine and goodness, then the bluster adds something of a touch of attractiveness. And those March winds remind us of life in general. It has its harsh side, has it not? Its winds are very keen and cutting at times, and there doesn't seem to be any shelter from them at all. In fact, it often looks as if life was all harshness and cruelty and suffering. And yet we know it isn't. Bluster is followed by geniality; the east wind gives place to the balmy breezes from the south. At the heart of things there are, after all, goodness and love and kindness that never fail. If we really know that to be the fact, we can easily put up with the roughness and the March winds, can we not? Indeed, there is something like a bracing tonic in the fact that we have them to put up with. Life with wind in the south all the time might get just a little tiresome.

---

Never yet was a spring-time,  
 Late though lingered the snow,  
 That the sap stirred not at the whisper  
 Of the south wind, sweet and low;  
 Never yet was a spring-time,  
 When the buds forgot to blow.

—MARGARET SANGSTER

*Though He be not far from every one of us.*

—Acts 17: 27

## IN THE COMMON DAY

21/3/8-  
**A** MAN who only sees God in the big things of life, and worships Him only in some temple set apart, is missing very much of the glory and fullness of living, and of the joy and comfort that should be his. God is in the thunder storm; and when the great clouds, forked with light, are rolling up the sky we irresistibly think of His majesty and might. But God is also in the quiet things of every day and we can, if we have the eyes to see, get just as true and real pictures of Him there. God is in the great events and crises of history, and he would be a dull and stupid man indeed who did not see Him there. But is He not equally in the little, commonplace things of every day, and even in such a commonplace and unimportant life as mine? And if I can see Him there will it not be an equally true and beautiful and joy-compelling revelation? What a pity it would be that I should wait for the storm or tragedy or great event to bring Him near me, when all the while I might see Him this very day in the living, growing, beautiful things that are all about me, or in the daily duties and associations of life that would never be commonplace or humdrum if He were seen to be really there! Truly our God is not a God who hideth Himself.

---

I come in the little things,  
 Saith the Lord:  
 Yea! on the gleaming wings  
 Of eager birds, the softly pattering feet  
 Of furred and gentle beasts, I come to meet  
 Your hard and wayward heart. In brown, bright eyes  
 That peep from out the brake, I stand confest.  
 On every nest  
 Where feathery Patience is content to brood  
 And leave her pleasure for the high emprise  
 Of motherhood—  
 There doth my Godhead rest.

—EVELYN UNDERHILL

*Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.*

—Hebrews 13: 21

## ARE YOU SATISFIED, SIR?

ONE of the most haunting incidents of the war that I have heard of recently was in connection with one of the Yorkshire regiments. Returning, a pathetically diminished remnant, from some splendid exploit in which they had added lustre even to the record of the British soldier, the only thing the men had to say to their commanding officer was the question spoken by one of them, "Are you satisfied with us, sir?" Back of the question I could read some of the, perhaps often expressed, dissatisfactions of that same commanding officer; but I could read also the confidence and love of men for the one who stood to them as the representative of the land for which they were ready to lay down their lives. And I wondered how it would be if you and I got into the habit of those brave Yorkshire soldiers, and, after the deeds that we carried through from day to day and hour to hour, we looked up into the face of our Great Commander and asked that simple, earnest, searching question:—"Are you satisfied with us, Sir?" It would surely be a good thing to get into the habit of testing our lives by what He thinks of them.

---

Lord of workers, endless wise,  
It would be a wondrous prize  
If our work so firmly stood  
Thou couldst praise and call it good.

Lord of workers, whose design  
Finer grows, and yet more fine,  
All our work with purpose fill,  
Help us make it better still.

Lord of workers, pointing far  
To ideal's perfect star,  
Leave us no ignoble rest,  
Lift our better up to best."

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN



*And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.*

—2 Samuel 16: 13

## THROWING STONES

21/3/25  
THE performance of this man Shimei wasn't a very seemly or dignified one, to say the least, but he justified it on the ground that David richly deserved the indignities. But as we read the story we wonder what moral right the stone-thrower had to administer the rebuke. Suppose it was deserved. It is very easy to remember the law when some other fellow is breaking it, but not nearly so easy when you are. The meanness of your neighbor looks despicably mean when you look at it through your spectacles; but the chances are good that you will take those spectacles off and lay them carefully aside before you attempt an intimate survey of yourself. It isn't fair, is it? In fact it isn't safe. A man ought to be a good deal harder on his own sin than he is on his neighbor's. In the first place he is responsible for it as he isn't for the other, and it is up to him to get rid of it. And in the second place, it may be just as bad. It may be all right for me to wish that my neighbor was better than he is, but while I am desiring that, it is quite in order for me to ask myself what kind of a neighborhood would it be if everyone in it was like I am. One of the sternest and most effective rebukes the Master of men ever gave was given to a crowd of supposedly pious men who stood with stones in their hands ready to throw at a sinning woman. Even though you think it is a job that needs doing badly, it is just as well to remember that it is not the best people who are most inclined to stone-throwing.

---

Friend, though thy soul should burn thee, yet be still.

Thoughts were not meant for strife, nor tongues for swords.

He that sees clear is gentlest of his words,

And that's not truth that has the heart to kill.

—ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN



*Quit you like men; be strong.**—1 Corinthians 16: 13*

## THE PEDLAR'S SON

21/3/25

THIS is the birthday of David Livingstone, born in Blantyre, Scotland, the son of a poor pedlar. Any man ought to be able to preach a sermon with a text like that. The best work of the world has been done by plain, hard-working and unselfish folk. If you do not like that combination of adjectives read history and find how often the qualities named have met in great men. Our David was all three. No one ever called the dark Highlander handsome. And somehow handsome men seem to have great difficulty in forgetting the fact. And what a worker he was. He was born with a hunger for knowledge and his long life of toil was but an answer to the call to discover. If a man can't work, work without knowing when to stop, there are not likely to be many splendid tasks, started or finished, to his credit at the end of the day. And talk about unselfishness—was any man ever able to forget himself in his work more than he? They called him "The Dew-drier" in Africa. He was the leader of his band as they started out in the early morning through the yellow grass and matted tangle, when every step brought a shower-bath over him. He was the pioneer, the dew-drier, the maker of ways for other people. It was a great calling and he did it after a great and enduring fashion. And so long as courage and devotion and goodness are great words among us we can never forget him. But not only should we hold his name in precious memory, but a finer tribute would be to try to follow his example.

---

Go to your work and be strong, halting not in your ways,  
 Baulking the end half-won for an instant dole of praise.  
 Stand to your work and be wise—certain of sword and pen,  
 Who are neither children nor gods, but men in a world of men.

—RUDYARD KIPLING

*They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother,  
Be of good courage.* —Isaiah 41: 6

## GIVE THEM A CHEER!

**D**ID it ever come home to you with absolute conviction, as you have tried to make your life count a little for human goodness and uplift, that the very best possible gift you can ever make to your fellow mortals is a spirit of incurable, unbounded, persistent hopefulness? In the first place it will keep your own soul healthy and your own thinking sound and clear. Discouragement and pessimism are like deadly mists that gather about undrained places. You can't live in health in the midst of them, and you can see neither earth nor heaven in true perspective. And when you think of the man beside you, there is nothing you can do for him that will count for so much as to put the light in his eye, the spring in his step, the ring in his voice and the iron in his backbone, that come alone from draughts of fresh hope and courage. Men are halting in good ways; they are giving up splendid undertakings; they are dying with unfinished, yet glorious, tasks, just through lack of hope. Give them a cheer; it is the best thing you can give them. And it isn't such a difficult thing to do, either, especially if you are in the mood for it. I guess that is the difficulty—to keep in the mood for it.

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When a man ain't got a coat, an' he's feelin' kind o' blue,  
And the clouds hang dark and heavy, an' won't let the sunshine  
through,  
It's a great thing, O my brethren, for a feller just to lay  
His hand upon your shoulder in a friendly sort of way.

Oh, the world's a curious compound with its honey and its gall,  
With its cares and bitter crosses; but a good world, after all.  
An' a good God must have made it—leastways, that's what I say,  
When a hand rests on my shoulder in a friendly sort of way.

—JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

*But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

—Romans 8: 25

## IN THE SPRING-TIME

EVERY one of these windy March days is longer than the last—there is something very inspiring and hope-giving in that. March in this northern country is the month of hope. There is not much to show for it yet, not many flowers, not many balmy breezes, not much warm sunshine, but there is unlimited hope untouched by disappointments. Spring is before us, the glorious summer is just ahead, harvest and the golden autumn are to come, and the prospect is so good. What a wonderful and heaven-sent gift imagination is! To be able to cherish a summer and singing birds and blue skies in our thoughts while March winds howl; to see through the cold and gloomy present the warmth and the brightness that are to be, is to carry in our soul a power that is nothing short of divine! To keep a summer ever in one's thought, to know always that there is a brighter and lovelier day ahead, that all the great harvests are yet to come, that all life's best is still to be reaped—that is something like the way we should live, and that is something like the lesson this first spring day teaches us. You say that such a lesson is not there, and that our imaginings are vain and have no real facts back of them. Well, I am sorry for you, for I know they are.

---

The way is dark:  
Keep cheer, my heart.  
From the next height  
May gleam a light;  
And far, faint music,  
Steals across the starless night.

The way seems long;  
But farther on—  
A little farther on—  
Thou'lt find the Song!

—MARY CROMWELL LOW

*And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters,  
saith the Lord Almighty.*

—2 Corinthians 6: 18

## GOD THE FATHER

26/2/25  
IT may be hard at times to believe that one man out of the fifteen hundred millions that are alive upon this world to-day can matter much to God. And the difficulty seems exaggerated even when we remember the countless generations of men there have been upon our earth, and that perhaps there are thousands of other worlds besides our own. But whether our trouble in so believing is insuperable or not depends altogether on what kind of God we are thinking of. Given a God who could make such a universe as ours is, and who is really the Father of the spirits of the men and women who are born into it, and we haven't much of a problem left. If Jesus was right in the tremendous emphasis He laid upon the Fatherhood of God—and that wonderful thought is to be taken in its living, vital meaning—then a special providence for every man and a place in God's heart and plan for each human child is not only a possibility but an inevitable sequence.

"Our Father"—so it was One prayed  
Long ago—  
In Galilee—

And by this deathless "our" He made  
The least among us unafraid,  
Serene and glad, with lifted head  
And faith that smiles because He said,  
Long ago—  
In Galilee—

"Our Father."

"Our Father"—this the deathless prayer  
Long ago—  
In Galilee—

Of Him, our Brother, holy, rare;  
And all God's children, everywhere,  
Shall claim their heritage and say

"Our Father"—as He taught one day  
Long ago—  
In Galilee—

"Our Father!"

—GRACE ALLEN

*But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.*

—Matthew 5: 44

## MAKING OUR OWN ENEMIES

IF a man has a persistent, inveterate enemy, the fault is generally very much his own. I know that that is something of a hard saying, for it is bad enough to have a real enemy, who is ready to do you a mean turn whenever he can, without being held responsible for him. But it is absolutely true that it takes at least two people to make a quarrel, and it is extremely difficult for any half-reasonable man to keep on being an active enemy toward you if you keep on being a kindly, courteous, Christian gentleman toward him. It may be that a few men could do it for a long time, and it may be that many could keep it up for a little while, but there must be very few who could persist in hating through the years in face of such treatment. Of course, you may say that you are under no obligation to treat some men kindly and courteously; that they have quite forfeited their right to any such treatment; but you cannot get that idea from the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. In fact He was very explicit and emphatic that that was the kind of treatment you owed every man, and especially the man who hated you. And if you say that the task of treating your enemy handsomely after this fashion is a too-difficult and taxing one, I will take straight issue with you at once. There is hardly anything in the world that you will find easier to do when once you make up your mind to it and really get started. And there is nothing that you will find much more satisfaction and pleasure in doing. If you don't believe me, try it!

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He drew a circle that shut me out—  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout;  
But Love and I had the wit to win;  
We drew a circle that took him in.

—EDWIN MARKHAM

*Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.*

—Job 8: 21

## 26/3/25 THAT SCOWL ON YOUR FACE

IF one really is determined to be miserable and unhappy he can easily find enough to make and to keep him that way all his days. But if he has not so determined, there is enough available sunshine in nearly any day to make it measurably bright and cheery. The atmosphere of our life is not so much of the divine will as it is of our own human ordering. We see blue skies overhead if we look up with clear-visioned and hopeful eyes, but a murky spirit will darken the brightest day. There are plenty of things to fret about to keep the scowl on our face for ever, but there are infinitely more things to rejoice in if we only train ourselves to see them. And we might as well face the fact that that murky spirit is never quite forced upon us; and if we cannot see the brightness and the glory of life the fault rests on us more than it does anywhere else. That scowl on your face does not condemn Providence, it does not condemn your friends and your neighbors, it condemns you. And you can take it off if you will. As against that you may argue that you were born with a tendency and set in that direction; but I do not believe that the effort to lay the blame on your forebears can succeed either. The set of a man's face isn't so hard and fast that it cannot be changed; and no at all normal man is condemned to a sour visage and a gloomy spirit. Yes, you can take that scowl off if you will. And that being the case, there certainly is no argument in favor of keeping it there.

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Ah brothers, still upon our pathway lies  
The shadow of dim weariness and fear;  
Yet, if we could but lift our earthward eyes  
To see, and open our dull ears to hear,  
Then should the wonder of this world draw near,  
And life's innumerable harmonies.

—ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN



*But the fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy.*

—Galatians 5: 22

## AN OPEN DOOR

26/3/25

COMPLAINING of life and its tragedies and sorrows is, in view of all the facts, a very foolish and a very wrong thing to do. For, when we come to think of it, no matter how burdened or troubled any life may be, the one thing that has always given joy and pleasure and satisfaction of the most real and abiding kind is ever a possibility. Since man has been man and God's world was made it has always and everywhere been the case that men and angels and even God Himself have found the most exquisite joy of living in doing something to help or make happy other folk. All men have admitted that, and the sanest, most healthy-minded, the best men have borne the most unquestioning testimony to such a philosophy. And if that be true is there, then, any life, no matter how hampered or troubled, that hasn't a doorway into the very joy and gladness of heaven lying wide and invitingly open to it? And, with such an opportunity and invitation, to hint that any life is doomed to misery is to be untrue to the fundamental facts of living. Of course if we refuse to see and to enter open doors, can we blame any one but ourselves if we live so little in God's House of Joy. That House is there and its door does stand very wide and invitingly open to any one who would enter it.

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From sun to sun, on silence-saddled feet,  
The Hours go by, and on each nun-like face  
Who will may catch a smile than dawn more sweet,  
Or, leaden-eyed, may miss its fleeting grace.

Within her hands each bears a goodly gift,  
And while she neither proffers nor withholds,  
She tarries not to urge upon unthrift  
The precious things she yields to earnest souls.

—JAMES B. KENYON

*Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.*

—*Psalm 37: 7*

### WAIT PATIENTLY

26/3/25  
**T**HE chances are that you will have to wait anyway, so why not do it patiently? It will be much easier on you, and much easier, too, on the people who have to look at you. You know that you do not yourself care to be near a fussy, impatient individual; it gets on your nerves. And, really, there is not much sense in complaining that you have to wait for so many things. Those things that come right off without any waiting are seldom worth much. The very best things in life are the things we must wait for, the sweetest, most satisfying fruit of living is never of mushroom growth, but ripens slowly, and sometimes through dark and sunless days. And to have waited patiently for it is the only way thoroughly to enjoy it when it does drop into our hand. So often we wear ourselves out with worry and fret because our fruit doesn't ripen, and then when it does we have no tranquillity of soul left to enjoy it. "Wait patiently for Him," realizing that His hand is over your life and in due course is bringing its truest joys and blessings to you—that is the secret of restful, happy living. You say it is a secret hard to come at. Well, if it were easy it might not be worth so much. But it is a secret worth searching for with all one's soul, for much not only of life's tranquillity, but also of life's usefulness, depends upon our finding it.

---

Would'st thou that she should quickly leave thy waters,  
The galley dark that carries grief and care?  
Be patient! Patience is the moral axis,  
The mighty secret of calm souls and fair.

'Twas patience made the world, and patience rules it;  
"Art is but endless patience" (and love's power!);  
The highest holiness, the deepest wisdom,  
Of long and wondrous patience are the flower.

—ALICE STONE BLACKWELL (*Translated from the Spanish*)

*For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content.*

—Philippians 4: 11

## I HAVE LEARNED

IN telling us that he had learned in whatsoever state he was therewith to be content, the great apostle to the Gentiles laid special emphasis upon the first three words. Paul was not one of these easy-going souls to whom contentment is a gift of nature, and sometimes a rather dangerous gift too. He throbbed and thrilled with ambition and restlessness and the desire to be getting on, and anything like contentment that came to him had to be grown in the field of discipline and experience, the stern and forbidding field where the best of life's fruits are nurtured. He had to learn it and it was because he had to learn it, and the process was a testing and difficult one, that he speaks of the result with a note of triumph, as of a great and significant achievement. It would seem as if he felt that one of the very finest and most satisfactory things he could say about himself was that he had accepted life as a school and had faithfully tried to learn the lesson which it would teach. Happy man was he that he could say "I have learned." And if he could learn, surely there is hope for nearly any one. That is one folly some of us are guilty of, of thinking that goodness is natural to some people. It is never just that. The only goodness that amounts to much is the goodness that must be achieved just as Paul achieved it, through buffeting and discipline and the testing ways of life.

---

There is a jewel which no Indian mine can buy,  
 No chemic art can counterfeit;  
 It makes men rich in greatest poverty,  
 Makes water wine, turns wooden cups to gold,  
 The homely whistle to sweet music's strain—  
 Seldom it comes, to few from Heaven sent,  
 That much in little, all in nought—Content.

—ANON.

*Wherefore should the nations say, Where is now their God?*

—Psalm 115: 2

## WHERE IS GOD?

28/3/5  
**T**HE old question keeps asking itself in the hearts of thousands of men and women as war and death and struggle multiply themselves over the face of the world. Apparently it is not easy for some to hold to their faith that He is still here among men and nations, working out His infinite purposes of good. The situation seems too diabolical for them to believe that the God of infinite love and tenderness and fatherhood can be in it. But, admitting that the facts do make a tremendous challenge to faith, it remains that the old faith does justify itself and does stand the test. Our God is not one who sitteth among the cherubim. He is here among men, hoping, sorrowing, sinning men; men who make mistakes; men who fail of the good and ideal thing that was before them, yet men who are made in His image, who are called to be His sons. All that might have been has not been, but even in the midst of baffled hopes God has not left us; He is not hopeless of us; He has not been compelled to change His programme for human redemption and upbuilding in righteousness and goodness and love. He is still working away at His task of redeeming the world, and leading men up into sonship with Him. The only trouble is, we do not work with Him as we should.

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Help us to keep the faith through certain hours,  
When the hand falters and the courage fails,  
And nothing but the grime of toil seems ours.

Help us to keep the faith through certain nights  
Of doubt and apprehension, when we lose  
Sight of that hope which is the light of lights.

Through toil, through sacrifice, through very death—  
Help us to help our souls to keep the faith.

—THEODOSIA GARRISON

*For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come.*

—Song of Solomon 2: 11, 12

## THE SPRING TIME

07/3/25

LET us thank God for the prospect of the spring. One of these days our very souls will rejoice in soft breezes and singing birds and green fields flecked with flowers. There is joy enough in the thought to take the chill out of the north wind that blows to-day and make the cutting snow seem like an April shower. Spring time, May time, summer time is coming; there is a good time just ahead; let us be glad for that. But is not our life to-day just like our life should be every day?—the good day, the spring time, the joy, the gladness just opening up to us. To-morrow the sun will shine brighter, the sky will be bluer, life's song will be sweeter, the world will be better—in life and in death that should be our faith and hope. And we should not let any devil's pessimism rob us of it, for it is just as well founded and assured as is our confidence to-day that March will not last for ever, but will lead on to the gladness and the perfume and the joy of spring. The God who can make a spring out of the chill and bluster and harshness of March can do anything wonderful and splendid past all our dreaming and imagination.

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The trees were bare and black  
and still,  
The leaf buds hard and tight;  
The pines and cedars hung their  
heads  
Beneath a cap of white.

And it was winter on the hill  
And winter in the sky;  
Yet, flashing through the with-  
ered trees,  
I saw a robin fly!

I hurried to my little house,  
I whispered to the hedge,  
I whispered to the lilac bush  
Just at the garden's edge.

They heard, I think—they stir-  
red a bit—  
Oh, it is almost spring!  
For up the farther road to-day  
I heard a robin sing!

—ABIGAIL CRESSON



*Neglect not the gift that is in thee.*

—1 Timothy 4: 14

### TIME TO POLISH UP

THERE is nothing about the ordinary man that gets as little real hard use as his own thinking machinery. The party caucus hands him out his political opinions, and he puts them on and wears them like a ready-made coat, without even getting the sleeves lengthened or a button moved. Even when it comes to the all-important matter of religion it is remarkable how cut-and-dried and made-up and juiceless most of his ideas and convictions are. It is actually astonishing how little grey matter nearly every one of us mixes with his everyday living. We are thinking animals, but we don't think. The one great talent we have we fold up in a napkin and place carefully away. But the few men who do think, they run the whole show, business, politics, the church, and everything else that is worth running. The rest of us sit around and grow old and stodgy and no-account. The fact of the matter is, nothing will keep us young and useful and worth while like ideas, living, up-to-date, vigorous ideas, and we ought to keep bristling with them like a ten-year-old till we are ninety at least. It is time a good many of us started in to polish up our mental machinery by the friction of vigorous use. Indeed it is long past time—so long past that if we do not soon begin there is small chance that we ever will. Make an experiment—ask yourself if in the last month you have read a stimulating, thought-providing book, or given yourself to the working out in any alert way of one real idea. If you haven't, isn't it about time you got that mental machinery of yours turning a few wheels, before the whole thing stops dead still?

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Give us this day our daily bread, we pray,  
And give us likewise, Lord, our daily thought,  
That our poor souls may strengthen as they ought,  
And starve not on the husks of yesterday.

—PHILLIPS BROOKS



*Thou makest him glad with joy in thy presence.*

—Psalm 21: 6

## PLAYING THE GAME

2/4 1/2 5-

**W**HY is it that we do not play more than we do?

Thousands of men will watch a professional baseball match or a hockey game with the keenest and most intense interest, who never play a single game of any kind from one year's end to another. They enjoy it hugely too, after a fashion, and no doubt it has a decided recreative value, but I am thoroughly convinced that there is more profit to a man in his actually himself playing one game, even in the most awkward and amateurish fashion, than in his watching a dozen brilliantly-played professional ones. Sometimes I fear that we Anglo-Saxons are forgetting how to play. The man from the shores of the Mediterranean hasn't forgotten. The Italian drain-digger can scarcely keep from playing practical jokes on his fellow laborer a dozen times a day. But we seem to have grown too owlish and solemn-faced for any such thing as that. We don't play enough and therefore too often we work with a grouch in our heart and a scowl on our face. More of genuine play would give us a greater ability for homely, simple happiness. Play is good for children, but it is just as good for grown folks, and just as necessary. If you don't think so, that is a sure sign that you need more of it. And if you have reached the stage where you think that play is wrong for grown-up sensible people—why then you are about hopeless.

---

So take Joy home,  
And make a place in thy great heart for her,  
And give her time to grow, and cherish her;  
Then will she come, and oft will sing to thee  
When thou art working in the furrows; ay,  
Or weeding in the sacred hour of dawn.  
It is a comely fashion to be glad—  
Joy is the grace we say to God.

—JEAN INGELow



## APRIL

*Pale season, watcher in unvexed suspense,  
Still priestess of the patient middle day,  
Betwixt wild March's humored petulance  
And the warm wooing of green-kirtled May,  
Maid month of sunny peace and sober gray,  
Weaver of flowers in sunward glades that ring  
With murmur of libation to the spring.*

ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN



*Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*

—Habakkuk 2: 3

## SPRING IS COMING

2/4/25

IT seems to have been very weary work waiting for the spring this year. Of course it often is, but we seem to forget that from year to year, and are inclined to think that this one has been just a little worse than all the others. As a matter of fact it probably has not been any more trying to our patience than many another has been, if we could just think ourselves back into other days. The good things, however, do seem to have a great way of delaying themselves, do they not? And yet they do come, very many of them. We plan for and hope for and expect them, and occasionally it seems a long time before they appear, but many of them slip in upon us at the last almost when we are not looking for them. When we reckon up, most of us have had a great many of the good things that we were looking and longing for come to us, not exactly in the way we pictured, it may be, and yet in as good a way as we pictured. And so we oughtn't to complain, neither ought we to grow too hopeless about the future. The wind is very cold to-day, and yet spring is likely to come in very reality before many days have gone by. Possibly life itself may seem a little bleak and barren to some of us at this present moment, but things are likely to brighten and warm up before long, if we give them a chance to. They so often have done that before that we can actually reckon on it. The spring that we wait for is just about sure to come. And many of those other things are just about sure to come too; perhaps they will greatly surprise us one of these days.

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They say that life is a highway and its milestones are the years,  
And now and then there's a toll-gate where you buy your way with  
tears.

It's a rough road and a steep road and it stretches broad and far,  
But at last it leads to a golden Town where golden Houses are.

—JOYCE KILMER

*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil.*

—Jeremiah 29: 11

## THE SHUT SOUL

2/4-25  
IF there is one thing that a kindly God wishes to do for men more than another it is to keep their thoughts and hopes from turning in on themselves, and their lives from becoming self-centred and unresponsive. One of the reasons why the world is made so beautiful and so crowded with variety must be that men, seeing it, will be drawn out of themselves, and for a time forget personal affairs in the charm and interest of things about them. And for most of us life is so ordered that there is a multitude of things and people appealing to us and making demands of us, so that it is very difficult for us to forget, or to sit down unmolested in any little narrow world of which we are the centre. And yet, with it all, some of us do manage to live a very circumscribed and contracted existence, and to shut our souls against so many of the appeals and voices that would save us from our own selfish selves. And in doing so how much we miss of what was intended for us and how joyless and drab we make our lives, God only knows. Undoubtedly He did intend that life should be full of zest and interest for every one of us, and should know all the joy of bigness and broadness and far-vision, but we thwart and make impossible all His planning when we shut the windows of our souls against His world and His providences.

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My house has windows that are wide and high;  
I never keep the curtains drawn  
Lest I should miss some glory of the sky,  
Some splendour of the breaking dawn.

My soul has windows where God's sun streams in;  
They never, never shuttered are,  
Lest their closed blinds hide in my soul some sin  
And keep some lovely thing afar.

—ANNA BLAKE MAZQUIDA



*A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on and are punished.*

—Proverbs 22: 3

8/4/25

## THE PRUDENT MAN

I HAVE often thought of him and wondered just how good and how useful a man he was. The old proverb-maker tells us about him "The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself," he tells us. But I have never been able to think much of such performance as that. The sight of a man hiding himself from anything, that is, in any normal life and time, does not seem very edifying. And I have decided, therefore, that prudence is a somewhat negative virtue, that needs to be practised with a great deal of moderation. As over against the "simple" man of the proverb-maker's picture who passes on and is punished, the prudent man, of course, shows up well. But prudence has a very strong tendency to fix its eye altogether too closely upon the evil thing that it foreseeth and would escape from. And there is much danger in that. If we look too long there is a grave danger that we shall be ready to pay too great a price for the escape. To insist always on keeping a whole skin may be prudent but it is also rather cowardly at times. A thousand times in life a man ought to be ready to forget about consequences and recklessly face up to his duty. To be discreet always is sometimes to be a coward. It is better to be punished occasionally than to be a poltroon.

---

Ah, well! the world is discreet;  
 There are plenty to pause and wait;  
 But here was a man who set his feet  
 Sometimes in advance of fate.

Suffice it that he never brought  
 His conscience to the public mart;  
 But lived himself the truth he taught,  
 White-souled, clean-handed, pure of heart.

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

*I poured out my complaint before Him; I showed before Him my trouble.*

—Psalm 142: 2

## MAKING OUR COMPLAINT

3/4/25  
I SHOULD not like to be guilty of exaggeration, but I believe that if it could be found out what all the people in the world were doing at any one moment, it would be discovered that nearly half of those who were awake were complaining. If we could gather together into one pile all the complainings of all sizes that have passed from human lips in one day we should have a tremendous and a most hideous-looking mountain. We do it thoughtlessly often, and mean little ill by it, but just the same it is a bad and an altogether unhealthy habit, and we ought to check ourselves in it. The old Psalmist said that he poured out his complaint before the Lord, but the psalm in which he tells us about it lets us know that neither mind nor heart were in a very healthy state when he said it. Perhaps it is better to complain before the Lord than anywhere else, but complaining is a pretty poor business anywhere for people who have as much to be grateful and glad for as we have. Men would very much rather listen to our expressed gratitude and appreciation, and I am sure the Lord would too. And the effect is likely to be vastly more pleasing in our own souls. And it isn't as if we had no story to tell on that side. As a matter of fact what really have we got to complain of after all! Not very much, as I reckon it up.

---

Sometimes when all the world seems grey and dun  
And nothing beautiful, a voice will cry,  
"Look out, look out! Angels are drawing nigh!"  
Then my slow burdens leave me one by one,  
And swiftly does my heart arise and run  
Even like a child while loveliness goes by—  
And common folk seem children of the sky,  
And common things seem shaped of the sun.

—ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

*For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands; happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.*

—Psalm 128: 2

## FINDING THE ZEST OF IT

8/4/28-

THAT fiction as to the risk and seriousness of overworking seems to die hard among us. If we should listen to some people we should conclude that about half the world was in danger of collapse through having too much to do. And yet I doubt if, since the world began, there have been a dozen people who have died from overwork. It is true, indeed, that a great many folk mix too much care and anxiety and drudgery with their work, and that sometimes has a very bad effect. But it is all unnecessary and in no sense a part of the job. Work itself is a tonic, the very elixir of life. If you do not feel it so there is something the matter, and you had better examine the situation a little. It may be that you have the wrong job, or it may be, indeed, that you have the wrong way of working at the right job. The finest task in the world can be spoiled by a wrong way of looking at and feeling toward it. Or it may even be that you are afflicted with that terrible vice of laziness, than which there is scarcely anything worse in this sad world of ours. But whatever the reason may be, there is something very seriously the matter in the case of any man to whom his work is not his joy, and who does not find relaxation and renewal in it every day. Man's work is not his bane but his blessing.

Up, lad, up, 'tis late for lying;  
Hear the drum of morning  
play;  
Hark, the empty highways crying  
'Who'll beyond the hills away?'

Up, lad: thews that lie and  
cumber  
Sunlit pallets never thrive;  
Morns abed and daylight  
slumber  
Were not meant for man alive.

Clay lies still, but blood's a rover;  
Breath's a ware that will not keep.  
Up, lad: when the journey's over  
There'll be time enough to sleep.

—A. E. HOUSMAN

*Say not I will do so to him as he hath done to me.*

—Proverbs 24: 29

## IN HIS OWN COIN

8/4/25  
WELL, why not? Doesn't he really deserve to be paid back in his own coin? Isn't it just ordinary justice that he be made to pay the price of his meanness and treachery to me? And who can do it better than I, who know all about the circumstances? Well, in the first place perhaps you are not the best person in the world to decide upon his conduct and to say what punishment he should receive for it. You may be prejudiced. And then if he really has done what you say and deserves all you think he does, this old world will have a way of bringing it home to him even if you do not take the matter in hand. It will be done much more effectively than you can do. Thinking only of his deserts it is better for you not to proceed to pay him back what is coming to him. And thinking of yourself it is infinitely better for you not to do it. In the first place the sure way to make yourself feel as mean as you think he ought to be made to feel is for you to try to get even with him. And in the second place the sure way to make yourself something like him is to try to do it. Trying to get even is the one sure way of getting behind. But trying to make an enemy into a friend—well, that is the finest thing you will ever attempt to do your whole life through. And one of the hardest, too. But then, that makes it all the more worth trying. But this is to be said, too, it will be all the easier if we try to make a very thorough and complete job of it. Go all the road; stop with no half-way measures, for only in that way will the thing be possible at all. Don't just forgive your enemy; that's hardly enough.

---

He who has a thousand friends has not a friend to spare,  
And he who has but one enemy shall meet him everywhere.

—EASTERN PROVERB

*For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.*  
 —Isaiah 64: 4,

## THE DIVINE SURPRISE

8/4/28.

**T**HANK God for the spring. Like many of the great gifts He sends us, it comes upon us each time with something of a surprise. We thought we knew how softly the wind could blow, how dear the robin's song in the early morning, how sweet the pretty, murmuring notes of the bluebird, but when they come upon us fresh again we find that our memory of them was far short of the reality. The joy of one real spring day is even better than we thought it would be. And I suppose it will be that way all through life, and death, and the great future that lies beyond. God will surprise us, and it will be better and richer and fuller than our thought of it could ever be. No spring was ever quite so beautiful as this one; no day ever quite so rich and full and satisfactory as to-day, and so it will be when time has ticked itself out and eternity stretches out into the unmeasured future. To-day's gift is good, but to-morrow's will be better, and we shall never reach the place where we may feel that God has given us His best.

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The first glad token of the Spring is here  
 That bears each time one miracle the more,  
 For in the sunlight is the golden ore,  
 The joyous promise of a waking year;  
 And in that promise all clouds disappear  
 And youth itself comes back as once before,  
 For only dreams are real in April's store  
 When buds are bursting and the skies are clear.

Fair season! at your touch the sleeping land  
 Quickens to rapture, and a rosy flame  
 Is the old signal of awakening;  
 Thus in a mystery I understand  
 The deepest meaning of your lovely name.  
 How it will be in that perpetual Spring.

—THOMAS S. JONES, JR.



*The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show (or with looking).*

—Luke 17: 20

## MAKING IT APPLY

8/4/25  
**I**N these days when life is so complicated what one of us has not occasionally felt that it is impossible to reduce it to the terms of the simple teaching of Jesus Christ? In the old-fashioned times when human relations were not so involved, and the problems of what was right and what was wrong were not so perplexing, it may have been easy, but now we are inclined to say that it is impossible and to give up the effort. But all through the history of Christianity, men have been inclined to do that same thing. They went into the cloister because, they said, it was not possible to be Christian in the throng and thick of things. Now we do not run away from life in that way, but we do often say, as they did, that we cannot live it as Jesus said we ought to. But we are as untrue to Him as they were. The life that He held up before us is possible and imperative. To deny that, is to be absolutely infidel. That it is so difficult only shows how splendid an achievement, it is and how splendidly worth trying. And after all doesn't Jesus give us all needed help in our problem and task when he reminds us that the Kingdom is within us? If we really have it there the task of making it outward will not be so hard and impossible. But if we haven't it there first of all, I am afraid that it shall be just about impossible for us to do much at working it out in the world.

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Hold there! Where runnest thou?  
 Know heaven is in thee.  
 Seek'st thou for God elsewhere,  
 His face thou'lt never see.

O, would thy heart but be  
 A manger for his birth;  
 God would once more become  
 A child upon the earth.

—JOHANNES SCHEFFLER



*When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: Yea, thou shalt lie down,  
and thy sleep shall be sweet.*

—Proverbs 3: 24

## CARRYING THE BIG BURDEN

11/4/24

THERE are a great many people these days who are carrying around with them heavier loads than they ought to bear. And they are carrying them just because they are good people, though it must be admitted that they are not quite as wise as they are good. It is true that any man who accepts his share of responsibility for human well-being and progress need never expect to go through life altogether care-free, but there are, nevertheless, very positive limits to the loads that he ought to try to carry. Some kinds of burden bearing do not help anyone or anything in particular. The pessimist, with his doleful report as to the progress of things and the outlook for the future, is actually loading up thousands of good people these days with burdens that are joy-destroying and very hard to bear. And there is no virtue at all in carrying them. His report may be true in spots, but it is a thousand miles from the truth just the same. His outlook finds justification in his own thinking only because he has a habit of ignoring history, of overlooking the vitality of righteousness, and of forgetting God. Whatever burdens we have to carry, at least let us not be guilty of the folly of carrying his. And even if he keeps on living and complaining, we ought to take our sleep just as usual.

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There is many a sorrow and pain, I know,  
As we tread the path of life;  
There is many a grief and lasting woe,  
And the way is toil and strife:  
But the hardest load that we have to bear,  
Is the labour and strength that's lost  
In building the bridge, with toilsome care,  
O'er the stream that is never crossed.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of east; and His voice was like the noise of many waters; and the earth shined with His glory.*  
*—Ezekiel 43: 2*

## A LESSON OF THE SPRING

4/25  
**W**HY is this old world of ours made with bluebirds and robins and song-sparrows in it? With hepaticas and bloodroot and spring-beauties? With soft breezes from the south, and greening fields, and swelling buds upon ten thousand trees? Conceivably it might be just as perfect a world from the efficient and practical point of view without any one of these things. And yet how much less perfect it would be without them! That they, and a thousand things like them, are here is a fact that we ought not to overlook, for it must have tremendous significance. The whole creation is crowded with beauty—beauty of form and sound and color, in wonderful riot of profusion and richness. If we say that it all just happened that way, in what way can we account for the strange instinct of nature that would produce such results? If we say that God made it so, then what are we forced to think of Him, and of the purposes which this aspect of creation reveal? The God who carpeted the earth with spring flowers must surely be a God in whom beauty and love of the beautiful is a fundamental quality. And surely this revelation of His instinct for the beautiful is intended to bring its message to us. His ideal for us, too, must be beauty. Would He not only have us help Him to make this a very beautiful world, but also have us become, like Himself, lovers of the beautiful?

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God must love beauty; for behold the flowers,  
 The trees, the color of the bluebird's wing,  
 The rose of dawn, the rainbow tints of sunset,  
 The swelling buds of spring.

He showers upon the world so much of beauty,  
 That we may from His gift a lesson learn;  
 Not only that we shall with joy accept it,  
 But give it in return.

—IDA M. THOMAS

*So teach us to number our days, that we may get us a heart of wisdom.*

—Psalm 90: 12

## FILLING THEM FULL

11/4/25

A DAY is just as we make it, is it not? If we take it as a wonderful gift fresh from the hands of God, to be filled with the best of joy and fidelity and service, its twenty-four hours will store away rich treasures of satisfaction and reward that time cannot dim or destroy; but if we take it lightly, triflingly, stupidly, go through it with no sense of opportunity or responsibility upon us, its record will have little to please and little that will abide. There never was a day yet that did not stand as a great doorway into some rich and fertile land of opportunity. Whether it was a day of sunshine, or a day of rain and shadow, there was always something in the weather that one could rejoice in and be glad for. Not to see that doorway would be to miss much. And even if one had to spend it all alone there never was a day yet that one could not fill with the companionship of great thoughts and worthwhile ambitions and aspirations. And surely no day can be flat and uninteresting if it have these. And every rising sun dawns upon a day in which any man may try honestly to fill his place in life and do well the work that comes to him, and if one succeeds in doing that, life must have a sense of deep satisfaction and be found to be splendidly worth while. How wonderfully inviting that doorway of the days stands to the man who is ready to fill them with all the things that are best and most satisfying?

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Heart free, hand free,  
 Blue above, brown under,  
 All the world to me  
 Is a place of wonder.  
 Sun shine, moon shine,  
 Stars, and winds a-blowing  
 All into this heart of mine  
 Flowing, flowing, flowing!

Mind free, step free,  
 Days to follow after,  
 Joys of life sold to me  
 For the price of laughter.  
 Girl's love, man's love,  
 Love of work and duty  
 Just a will of God's to prove  
 Beauty, beauty, beauty!

—WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

*The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.*

—Isaiah 9: 2

## IN THE DARK DAY

2/4/25  
IF we could, righteously and effectively, lift the dark cloud of war off the fair face of the world how quickly and eagerly we would do it. But we cannot, try as we will, and, in fact, all our trying is likely to have very little effect upon it. But there are some things that we can do that will help a little. For instance, we can keep the dark cloud of distrust and fear for the future from settling down upon our own heart and life. We can cherish in our souls from day to day the sure faith that the cloud is going to be lifted, we can, through the dark watches of the night, sing our song of hope and make ready to greet the morning. And in doing that we will help a little, and perhaps, a great deal, to hearten and strengthen the faith and expectation of a troubled world. If we were to live a thousand years there would never come to us a better opportunity of making our smile of hopefulness, and faith, and courage worth something to the world. And yet, when I come to think of it, I wonder if there is ever anything better that any man can do at any time than smile that smile of hopefulness and faith and courage. I am sure it will do more to bless and to brighten the world than very many of the more "practical" things that some folks put great dependence in. In the dark day just to believe in the light with all our souls is the finest and most helpful achievement open to us.

A cricket's chirrup,  
A tender sky,  
Night is oncoming  
And day must die.

A twilight hush,  
An evening star,  
Gloomy the night;  
But God is not far.

A blaze in the east,  
A burnished sky,  
God on the hilltops;  
*Day cannot die.*

—RALPH S. CUSHMAN

*So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

—Psalm 103: 5

## THE BOY AND THE MAN

13/4/28

ONE test of a man's life and worth is what the boy thinks of him. It is a pretty severe test, too. Of course it is easy for a man to be the hero of the mere youngster, but to retain that position as the child grows to the lad and the lad into young manhood calls for honest, straight-forward and manly living. I would rather have my son say I was clear grit and goodness all the way through than I would have my nearest friend outside the family say it. He is the most likely to know and the most likely to speak out his opinion honestly when he does speak. If I can stand the test of his straight-forward, everyday scrutiny and pass muster before his unsophisticated moral instincts and judgments I will not need to fear anyone else very much. But if my goodness does not make its appeal to the boy as something worthy of being sought after I may well question myself concerning its kind and quality. Somehow I think if it is what it ought to be he will appreciate and understand and yield convincing test of its genuineness. And one of the very best things any man can do as the years go by is to help to keep alive in the boy's heart a belief in all the best things by illustrating and exemplifying them in his own life. No man need worry about the coming on of the years if he can live, young and fresh and stimulating, in the heart and life of a boy.

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I mourn no more my vanished years;  
 Beneath a tender rain,  
 An April rain of smiles and tears,  
 My heart is young again.

No longer forward nor behind  
 I look in hope and fear;  
 But, grateful, take the good I find,  
 The best of now and here.

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER



*And hath made of one all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth.*

—Acts 17: 26

### CAN IT BE DONE?

54/25  
A VERY earnest and good and generally optimistic man expressed his opinion the other day that it could not. He said that the instinct to fight was in the blood of the race, and that he never hoped to see the time when any restraint of a social, economic or international kind would be able to secure anything like assured and permanent world peace. Well, if we are to think merely of restraint as applied from the outside, perhaps he is right. But what reader of the history of humanity has not seen many illustrations of the power of ideas to modify and radically change even such a seemingly enduring thing as human instinct? The idea has somehow got itself fixed in the minds of many that men ought to be able to live together in peace and harmony in this world, each man a brother of every other and all the sons of one great Father. And I believe there is strength enough and divinity enough in that idea absolutely to assure us that it is going to win out in human history yet. It can be and will be done. A fair, fond dream truly, but who will deny the possibility of it coming true! If you do, I fear you have life and God Himself against you. I am sure that its realization is one of the things down on His programme, and are there not many signs that it is actually working out in the history of the world?

---

Dreams are they, but they are God's dreams!  
 Shall we decry them and scorn them?  
 That men shall love one another,  
 That white shall call black man brother,  
 That greed shall pass from the market place,  
 That lust shall yield to love for the race,  
 That man shall meet with God face to face—  
 Dreams are they all—  
 But shall we withstand them—  
 God's dreams!

—THOMAS CURTIS CLARK



*Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.*

—Job 37: 14

## THE MIRACLE OF SPRING

15/4/25

IT will be nothing short of a crime if we allow that miracle to take place once more right before our very eyes and we never give it a passing thought or marvel once at its mystery. How does the tree pump up its life-giving sap to the farthest bursting bud upon its topmost branch? How does the crocus answer the call of the sun? How do the wild winds of Winter give place to the soft breezes of the Spring? By what strange instinct are the birds with us to-day that were a thousand miles away yesterday? Surely it were unpardonable dullness and stupidity on our part if we were to fail to ask these and a hundred other unanswerable questions and to stand in awe and reverence in the presence of the mystery and marvel of it all. Surely it all happens in this wonderful way, rather than after some humdrum, uninteresting fashion, that you and I should marvel and wonder and be subdued and humbled by its mystery and inexplicable charm. And if we should overlook it, or fail to be moved to the depths of our soul by it, how stupid and ungrateful it would be. Surely we should take pains to try to learn, and then to remember, our lesson—a lesson of the infinite love and beauty and goodness of the God who makes the spring.

God did not make this morning  
That I should soon forget  
The way the sun lit up the grass,  
When days come dark and wet.

He did not make the hillside  
Reach out into the wind,  
That I should breathe its  
courage,  
And leave it all behind.

He did not make this pine grove  
That I should softly lie  
And revel in its odors,  
Nor lay the memory by.

An oriole, a tanager—  
Such flashings overhead;  
Some night closed eyes will yield  
me back  
This lore of gold and red!

—MARIE LOUISE HERSEY

*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.*

—1 Corinthians 2: 9

## THE GOD OF SURPRISES

21/4/25  
**H**OW often He has proved Himself to be such in the long history of the world. And His surprises have generally been on the pleasant side, have they not? As our fathers used to say it, He has been better to us than our fears, and His unexpected ways of revealing Himself in life and history have shown His great goodness and love more than they have shown anything else. He came in the person of His Son once, and how that coming has been filling men's minds with wonder and surprise ever since! And as the days and the years and the centuries go on we are seeing ever more of the wonder and the glory of it. And surely we may believe that He is still a God of surprises. Surely it must be true that no finite human mind has been able to compass all His programmes, or to map out all the things that are to be in the great stretches of the history to come. No, He will still be the God of Surprises, and will keep on coming into human life in ways wonderful and glorious, past all our imagining. What a pity it would be if we did not let Him touch our hearts to feel that wonder and our eyes to see that glory.

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One asked a sign from God; and day by day  
 The sun arose in pearly, in scarlet set,  
 Each night the stars appeared in bright array,  
 Each morn the thirsting grass with dew was wet.  
 The corn failed not its harvest, nor the vine.  
 And yet he saw no sign.

One prayed a sight of heaven, and erewhile  
 He saw a workman at his noontime rest.  
 He saw one dare for honor, and the smile  
 Of one who held a babe upon her breast;  
 At dusk two lovers walking hand in hand;  
 But did not understand.

—VICTOR STARBUCK

*In knowledge, self-control; in self-control, patience; in patience, godliness.*

—2 Peter 1: 6

## SOME TIMELY VIRTUES

21/21/25

THERE are certain qualities of spirit and attitudes towards life that are always in place and that serve great and useful purposes at all times, but that seem to be specially required for this very day and hour that is upon us. Patience, that sane and gracious attribute, the bulwark of all strong and serviceable souls, is one of these. It has always been a prime requisite in all helpful living, but it has grown to be such an indispensable to-day that its absence threatens wreck and ruin. Goodwill, that wholesome, steady, clear-sighted attitude of the soul, is another grace that every man should cultivate sedulously in this day when nerves are on edge and a riot of uncharitableness and envy so easily takes possession of us. How many of the future dangers and difficulties would vanish away if there would only come into the hearts of every one of us an earnest and sincere desire for our neighbor's good that would help us to appreciate and understand him and unite earnestly with him in the great task of building up the world in peace and goodness! And would not these two timely virtues become ministers to our own souls of rare comfort and peace. I think it would be worth our while beginning to practise them as we have never done before. For while they are good to think about and to write about, they are better still to work into the actual fabric of living.

---

Calm soul of all things! Make it mine  
To feel, amid the city's jar,  
That there abides a peace of Thine  
Man did not make, and cannot mar.

The will to neither strive nor cry,  
The power to feel with others give.  
Calm, calm me more; nor let me die  
Before I have begun to live.

—MATTHEW ARNOLD

*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

—Galatians 6: 14

## THE CROSS AT THE HEART

21/4/25  
**T**HE Christian Church had its birth at the Cross of Jesus Christ. No matter what our idea of the Cross, or our theory of Atonement may be, we must admit that to be the fact. Just why it was we may not fully understand, but the truth of the statement is clear to us all. And we never could have had anything so good as the Christian religion had it been otherwise. About the poorest thing in all the world is a smug, self-satisfied, passionless religion. And we cannot consistently have such a religion with a Cross at the centre of it. It is true that some Christians are smug and self-satisfied and passionless, but they are such because they have failed utterly to get the significance of the Cross. They have taken it as a kind of talisman through which they are saved in some mysterious way, and not as a great, Divine principle that must be operative in all life. Jesus saves us through His Cross only as that Cross becomes the symbol of all our thought and aspiration and planning and the inspiration of all our life. And it is only a Cross-centred religion that has strength enough and vitality enough to save the world. What would we have done during those awful days of the war if we had had nothing but an easy-going religion with no Cross in it to fall back upon!

---

O joy, that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to Thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
And feel the promise is not vain  
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross, that liftest up my head,  
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead,  
And from the ground there blossoms red  
Life that shall endless be.

—GEORGE MATHESON

*Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life.*

—John 11: 25

## THE BOOK OF EASTER

21/4/25-

**W**ILL it not be written all over the face of the earth in a few days now, when grass and flower and tree are springing forth into life, and the birds are caroling with the birth of a new season! We cannot explain the spring; the most learned scientist could not do it. But how foolish both he and we would be should we refuse to enjoy it and to believe in it for that reason. We cannot explain the resurrection, either His or ours, but what incomparable folly would we be guilty of should we allow that fact to kill all faith and expectation. We say that spring is a natural phenomenon. But what do we mean by that and what does it really explain? And can we be sure that resurrection will not be just as natural a thing as the spring is, when we come to know? That we cannot explain the spring does not mean bare trees and bleak hillsides and a joyless May. That we cannot explain or understand resurrection does not mean that there will be no empty tombs or joyous awakening into fuller and richer and more glorious life. The God who can make a spring can make a resurrection just as easily.

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Who tells the little growing things,  
Tells them sweet and true,  
That this is Spring,  
That robins sing,  
That skies are soft and blue?

What Power whispers 'neath the grass?  
Is it Nature? Is it Spring?  
Do the rootlets hear  
That Easter's near  
And that the bluebirds sing?

We may call it Resurrection  
That stirs beneath the sod,  
But a dearer name  
That means the same,  
Is just to call it God.

—FREDERICK A. WHITING



*But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

—1 Corinthians 15: 57

## THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

14/25  
UNLESS there had been a resurrection, and a birth in the souls of His followers of an unquestioning faith that the Jesus whom they had seen yield up His life upon the cross was gloriously alive again, there never would have been a Christian Church or a Christian religion. That He lived made these things possible, and sent the little group of men and women, who had been utterly disappointed and undone by the tragedy of Calvary, out to begin an impossible task and to succeed with it marvellously in their day. And that He still lives makes everything that is good and splendid possible. Wrong and wickedness and hate cannot finally triumph, because He met and mastered them two thousand years ago, and the day of their final undoing must surely come. Goodness and justice and love must win through all the earth, for is not He their living Champion and Friend! If the Jesus who was dead is alive for evermore then there is no place in life for fear or doubt or pessimism, for the power of His resurrection is the guarantee of the victory of all that is best and most to be desired. What a glorious and marvellous hope that Easter hope is!

Lord, now that Spring is in the  
world,

And every tulip is a cup,  
Filled with the wine of Thy great  
love,

Lift Thou me up.

Raise Thou my heart as flowers  
arise

To greet the glory of Thy  
day,

With soul as clean as lilies are  
And white as they.

Let me not fear the darkness  
now,

Since life and light break  
through Thy tomb;

Teach me that doubts no more  
oppress,

No more consume.

Show me that Thou art April,  
Lord,

And Thou the flowers and the  
grass;

Then, when awake the soft  
spring winds

I'll hear Thee pass!

—CHARLES HANSON TOWNE



*And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and keep it.*

—Genesis 2: 15

## IN THE GARDEN

21/4/25

THIS very day, in this northern land of ours, there are literally hundreds of thousands of folks busy at that world-old task of making a garden. That garden may be confined to a few square yards behind a crowded city dwelling, or it may be out on the limitless prairie and include hundreds of acres, but the thing that is being done is essentially the same in each case. Men trust their seed in the soil in hope and expectation, and that is the heart of it all. And what faith and hope they have as they busy themselves with the task! Other sowings may not have been very fruitful, but there is always the hope that this one will have its fine yield. Hope springs eternal in the human breast whenever men go out to scatter their seed on the face of the good, clean earth. That it is so seems to hint that every man, whether consciously or not, has a sublime faith in the great eternal processes. Through untold centuries men have been planting and sowing, and in the process they have learned to have faith and hope and a great expectation as each year they come up to the task anew. There must have been very many fruitful harvests before that faith and expectation could become such an instinct of the soul. And indeed, have there not been untold fruitful harvests throughout all the crowding years! Surely the God of the harvest has remembered men through all these millenniums!

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There is no unbelief;  
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod  
And waits to see it push away the clod—  
He trusts in God.

There is no unbelief;  
Whoever sees 'neath winter's field of snow  
The silent harvest of the future grow—  
God's power must know.

—ELIZABETH YORK CASE

*Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness*

—Isaiah 55: 2

## PAINTING THE SKY

24/25  
**D**ON'T try to paint the sky a better blue, just enjoy the natural shade, 'tis plenty good enough. It might seem scarcely necessary to give such advice as that were it not for the fact that one can look around him any day and see a few hundred folks engaged in that very occupation. The homely, old-fashioned pleasures, possible to every man, are pretty satisfying. A tramp in the country air, a living book, a few kindly friends around an evening fire, a chat with a boyhood companion about old days and old ways—any one of these will give a man the keenest kind of pleasure, if he has only learned to appreciate them. But there are quite a few people who would leave any or every one of them for some things that do not come within a thousand miles of being so satisfying. When we cover life all over with artificiality and tinsel, we come desperately near to spoiling it altogether. And we pay tremendous prices for the artificiality and the tinsel too, while we might have the real thing, life whole and wholesome and full of satisfaction, at genuine bargain figures. How good life is if only we would see and understand it! And if our eyes were not so filled with the show and glitter of things we would easily see, and understand it. But life needs no gilding to make it very good.

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To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,  
 To throw a perfume on the violet,  
 To smooth the ice, or add another hue,  
 Unto the rainbow, or with a taper-light  
 To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,  
 Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.

—SHAKESPEARE—(*King John*)

*And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people.* —Isaiah 65: 19

## CHRISTIAN POLITICS

2 1/4/25

IT SEEMS very much easier for the most of us to see God in past history than to see Him in the movements and struggle of to-day. But ought we not to think of the spirit of the eternal Christ as battling its way through all the unrest and conflict of our time just as truly as it did in the first Christian century or any other century of the world's history? We think of Jehovah as guiding and controlling the destinies of Israel, but we find it hard to believe that our God is guiding and controlling the destinies of this fair Canada of ours. But the one is just as true as the other ever was. And to deny it is to be a Christian while we are reading our Old Testament and an atheist while we are reading the morning paper. Isaiah was sure that God was interested in the politics of Israel in the eighth century before Christ, but we can be sure that He is just as interested in the politics of Canada in the twentieth century after Christ. As much depends upon this as upon that and He has as many interests and great causes at stake now as He had then. And to fail to realize that in the fullest way is to rob our life, both individual and national, of a strength and virility they ought to have.

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The angels keep their ancient places;—

Turn but a stone and start a wing!

'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces,

That miss the many-splendored thing.

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)

Cry; and upon thy so sore loss

Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder

Pitched between Heaven and Charing Cross.

Yea, in the night, my soul, my daughter,

Cry, clinging heaven by the hems:

And lo, Christ walking on the water.

Not of Gennesaret, but Thames!

—FRANCIS THOMPSON

*O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all.*

—Psalm 104: 24

## LIFE'S ENDLESS CHANGE

24/4/25  
WE CAN scarcely be thankful enough, can we, for the great fact of change and variety in life? That there are no two people on all this earth alike; no two leaves on all the trees in all the world—surely these are wonderful and wonderfully significant facts. Since the world began there has never been a day that was quite like any other day; never a life that was exactly as some other one. There has never been a storm that was not followed by a calm. It has rained, and then the sun has shined, and the rain of to-day has not been quite like that of any other day that ever was, and to-day's sky is flecked with clouds as no other has been since the beginning of time. How much of life's joy and satisfaction grow out of the fact of all this wonderful variety and change! And in such a life as ours haven't the difficult and testing and hard things a perfectly legitimate place? If it were always unchanging sunshine from year end to year end how wearying it would grow to be! If life were always soft and smooth and easy, how tired of ourselves we would all become! If we hadn't hard and testing things to do how tasteless would become all the achievements of life. Indeed, if there were no sadness at all, could there ever be any such thing as a real joy! Yes, surely we should thank God every day that life has such endless variety and change about it. It was infinite love and wisdom that so planned it.

If all the skies were sunshine,  
Our faces would be fain  
To feel once more upon them  
The cooling plash of rain.

If all the world were music,  
Our hearts would often long  
For one sweet strain of silence,  
To break the endless song.

If life were always merry,  
Our souls would seek relief  
And rest from weary laughter  
In the quiet arms of grief.

—HENRY VAN DYKE

*For each man shall bear his own burden.*

—Galatians 6: 5

## RUNNING THE UNIVERSE

25/4/58

STRANGE, isn't it, but there seems to be numbers of people who think that the business of running the universe is easier than the business of running their own affairs. They are ready to tackle the former job at any time, even though there is nothing to give evidence that they have learned at all well how to do the latter. What a wonderful day in the history of the world it would be if some fine morning every man under the blue canopy would wake up with the determination that for twenty-four hours he would stick to his own contract, only giving an occasional friendly glance at the fellows working round him. There would be a lot of splendid work done that day, I can tell you. It is literally true that some of us spend nearly as much time and energy in sizing up and criticizing and finding fault with other people's work as we give to the right performance of our own. A politician in opposition may serve a very useful purpose but when we come to run our whole life on the principle that it is our chief duty to pick holes in the other fellow's work, we have placed ourselves in another kind of opposition. Really the best way to run the universe after all is for each man to stick pretty conscientiously at his own job. A world full of faithful, conscientious people, each one busy in a high-souled, intelligent way with his own job, would make a very good world, would it not?

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Home is your field of honor, there they wait,  
 The battles to be faced and fought and won;  
 Battles with self, that subtle foe and great,  
 With whom the quiet strife is never done;  
 Battles with circumstance, that holds us tied  
 To hateful things, when we, with courage high,  
 Crusaders to a holy war would ride.  
 Here is the citadel you hold and I,  
 Here in our hearts where none can ever see  
 Or understand or praise our victory,  
 Here in our daily lives—oh truth profound—  
 Here is our battle ground.

—MARY CAROLYN DAVIES



*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ.*  
—2 Corinthians 11: 3

## THE COST OF HIGH LIVING

1/5/25  
**THEY** are still talking about the high cost of living and offering their multiplied reasons and remedies. It is a tremendous job just keeping alive these days, and supplying ourselves with all the civilized things that seem to be necessary. If the prices keep on soaring many of us will have to find a way of making some of them seem not so necessary. And would it be a great calamity if we were even put to that? I scarcely think it would. I am not sure that we really need many of the things that we pay out much of our good money for now, or that we are much better off or happier in having them. Plain living and high thinking are supposed to go together very nicely, and by the same argument, high living and low thinking should consort. And too often they do, I fear. High living isn't as real and as worthy a product of civilization as high thinking is, and it hasn't got nearly as much to do with human happiness and well-being. Sometimes you hear men questioning if life is really worth while, but did you ever hear such a question come from one who had kept life simple and sincere, and had not covered it over with all sorts of veneer and artificiality? I certainly never did. Such questioning usually is a proof of the kind of life the questioner has been living.

---

Life? and worth living?

Yes, with each part of us—

Hurt of us, help of us, hope of us, heart of us,

Life is worth living.

Ah! with the whole of us,

Will of us, brain of us, senses and soul of us.

Is life worth living?

Aye, with the best of us,

Heights of us, depths of us,—

Life is the test of us!

—CORINNE ROOSEVELT ROBINSON



*For the fruit of the spirit consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth.*

—Ephesians 5: 9

## SPOILING THE JOB

1/5/25  
THE man whose life shows genuine goodness—and we all know pretty well what those words mean—is making the very finest contribution that he can to the world in which he lives. Our cleverness does not go so very far; it is not such a splendid contribution towards the progress of things as we sometimes imagine. Your statesman has brains and ability, but if he does not add character to his list of virtues he will serve the state only on the low level of mediocrity. He may seem sometimes to be doing great things, for cleverness is often very showy, but his work will not well stand the test of years. “Just to be good is enough?” No, not quite enough. But not to be good seriously spoils every other virtue and excellency. And the notion that some people have that goodness and cleverness cannot go together is not borne out by the facts. Badness is the stupid thing, and if goodness looks stupid to you it is either because you cannot see straight, or because it is an utterly sham goodness that you are looking at. And that real goodness does have that vital quality that makes it endure. It is one of the finest things in all the world to wear, keeping its youth and beauty and freshness and attractiveness all the way through. You say goodness, isn’t attractive? Well, well! You must have seen very poor samples of it. Take a look again. It has been known that men have made a show of goodness and that is a most repulsive thing, but you ought to be able to tell the genuine thing.

---

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

—JOHN KEATS

*I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever. —Ecclesiastes 3: 14*

1/5/25

## FEARING FOR THE WORLD

THERE seem to be a great many people these days who are troubled with a kind of unreasoning fear for the future of the world. Whichever way they turn they see trouble ahead, and all the unrest and disturbance of the present leads on in their vision to scenes still darker and more foreboding. Is their feeling justified? Is it sane and Christian? I cannot think so, and for several reasons. In the first place it shuts God out of the future too much. It cannot be that He is not still the God of history, and moulding and shaping the destinies of the world so far as men will let Him. And it cannot be that the man of any future day ahead of us will be any less the son of God than the man of the past days has been, or that the urge upward toward the good and the right and the holy thing will ever leave him. If he were the child of the devil we might well fear, but we do not believe he is. And then, the fear of the future will prove one of the greatest handicaps against us as we go forward to meet that future, and for that reason it can scarcely be a sane attitude. No, when we search through there is really every reason to believe that the world doesn't face the night, but rather some glorious, even if distant, morning. And one can wait with patience and equanimity when the morning is coming.

---

There's enough of God  
 In the heart of a rose,  
 In the smile of a child,  
 In the dewy blossom of dawn  
 To prove  
 That beauty is the soul of Him,  
 That Love is His sceptre,  
 And that all things created by Him  
 Face not the night  
 But an eternal morning.

—THOMAS CURTIS CLARK

*But let each prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*

—Galatians 6: 4

## TRYING THEM OUT

1/5 2 s-

THE only way to prove your theories is to put them into actual practice. It may be hard on them to give them up to such a test, but if they can't stand it, perhaps it is just as well that you should find it out. The chief difference between our theories and those of the other fellow, that we are jumping on and criticizing so hard, is that he is trying to make his work while we just have ours written out on linen bond in a fine Italian hand. There was a time when his looked as well as ours do, there may be a time when ours will work as poorly as his. I have heard folks finding fault with sermons whose own theories of preaching I would not like to see tried out on any inoffensive congregation. Even politicians are often hammered the hardest by people whose own constructive statesmanship wouldn't go very far in building up the nation. If our finding fault with other people's ways of doing things was always tempered by the thought that perhaps our ways wouldn't work any better, much of the criticism would lose its sting and bitterness. And that would be every way a gain. And it would be every way a gain also if we remembered that theories and policies and philosophies all have to be proved by trying. There is no use our boasting of our tree until we can show its fruits. Leaves and bloom are only protestations.

---

'Tis not the wide phylactery,  
Nor stubborn fast, nor stated prayers,  
That make us saints; we judge the tree  
By what it bears.

And when a man can live apart  
From works on theologic trust,  
I know the blood about his heart  
Is dry as dust.

—ALICE CAREY

*Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*  
 —1 Corinthians 1: 25

1/5/25

## A GOSPEL OF SUPERLATIVES

MANY people are afraid of superlatives. They think it is safer, and, in the end, more effective always to keep well within the mark. They believe in understating rather than overstating. And I agree with them in the main. But there is another side to the matter. Apparently there are some situations that you cannot overstate. When you are speaking of some things you cannot use superlatives, or words that have too big a meaning. We get that hint as we listen to Jesus speaking in the Gospels. As we might interpret them in certain moods, He said the most extravagant things possible. Looking at them from the narrow, matter of fact angle they seem even grotesque. Apparently, therefore, we are driven to the conclusion that we mustn't always keep looking at everything from that angle. To see life only on its surface and to fail to get into its deep and hidden meaning is to misunderstand and misinterpret it very seriously. And also to do injustice to the God who is at its centre. Jesus taught us to use great words and great ideas when speaking of human life or destiny or duty, and we oughtn't to miss the lesson. And he taught us another lesson as well, namely, the bigness of some little things. Indeed that was one of the greatest truths that His own life illustrated almost from its beginning to its end. And that is one of our hard lessons to learn.

---

They all were looking for a king  
 To slay their foes and lift them high;  
 Thou cam'st, a little baby thing  
 That made a woman cry.

O, Son of Man! to right my lot  
 Naught but thy presence can avail;  
 Yet in the road thy wheels are not,  
 Nor on the seas thy sail.

—GEORGE MACDONALD

## MAY

*May is building her house. From the dust of things  
She is making the songs and the flowers and the  
wings;*

*From October's tossed and trodden gold  
She is making the young year out of the old;  
Yea, out of the winter's flying sleet,  
She is making all the summer sweet,  
And the brown leaves spurned of November's  
feet  
She is changing back again to spring's.*

—RICHARD LE GALLIENNE





*And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee.*

—Deuteronomy 26: 11

## ALL IN A MAY MORNING

1/5/25

WHAT a great, good, hopeful world it is as one steps out into it one of these bright, beautiful, May mornings! It is so easy to believe in things, to have faith and hope for the days that are to come, to forget the gloom and the grief that have gone, as one stands in the midst of the growing freshness and charm and springing life that are all around these first real days of spring. Not to feel the thrill of it; not to have born within one the sense of its loveliness; to miss all its wonderful beauty of sight and sound and smell; to let its wooing call to joy and light-heartedness and unbounded faith and expectation go past unheeded, is surely to shut the door of the soul in the face of the God who is trying His best to make us see and feel and enjoy. What did He make budding trees and apple blossoms and bird songs for save that you and I should joy and rejoice in them! Why were hope and expectation born in the great world about us this wondrous May morning save that they might, too, be born in your soul and mine! Surely it ought to be impossible on such a day as this to stand outside that charmed circle of the Spring and cherish in our hearts anything of sadness or pessimism or fear! Surely it were black ingratitude to nourish in our souls any winter of discontent, or regret, or hopelessness, when over the face of the whole earth is spread the glorious, sunlit beauty of the Spring!

What is so sweet and dear  
 As a prosperous morn in May,  
 The confident prime of the day,  
 And the dauntless youth of the year,  
 When nothing that asks for bliss,  
 Asking aright, is denied,  
 And half of the world a bridegroom is,  
 And half of the world a bride?

—SIR WILLIAM WATSON

*That they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.*

—Isaiah 61: 3

## THE TREES OF OUR PLANTING

3/5/25- I SAW an old man the other day planting trees, and the thing looked both significant and interesting. If his enterprise prove successful, it will be long after he has quit this mortal life that it will reach its fruition, and men will rejoice in the glorious beauty and shade and fruitfulness which he has helped to create. And that thought ought to help to inspire him to do his deed with care and thoroughness. In the long after years men will thank him for what he has done. Is not all of life something like the planting of a tree? If we live it well, there will be many who come after us who will have reason to rejoice in the abiding beauty which we have helped to create. Sometimes life seems so fleeting and transitory that we wonder if it leaves anything behind it which abides, but is not all that is beautiful in our modern society and civilization the result of the fine, good living of individual men and women who have gone before? They planted their tree and it grew into beauty and fruitfulness, and to-day we are able to rejoice because they lived and loved and labored so well. And these trees of righteousness that we plant, shall they not live on in beauty and in fruitfulness throughout ten thousand years! I am sure that there is nothing that shall live so long or grow so beautiful and perfect.

---

He who plants a tree  
 He plants youth;  
 Vigor won for centuries, in sooth;  
 Life of time, that hints eternity!  
 Boughs their strength uprear,  
 New shoots every year  
 On old growths appear.  
 Thou shalt teach the ages, sturdy tree,  
 Youth of soul is immortality.

—LUCY LARCOM

*My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.*

—Job 7: 6

## LIFE IS TOO SHORT

3/5/25

WE USE that expression often in a sort of jocular way; but though half in fun the other half generally has a good deal of seriousness in it. Life is too short to waste it in disagreements and quarrelings and misunderstanding. For men, who at best seldom have more than four score years allowed them, to waste whole years of it in bickering and getting on badly with folks is an outrageously foolish performance, for they have so little time left in which to enjoy the huge fun and satisfaction that there is in being agreeable and neighborly. Life also is too short to spend much of it in doing the things that do not count, and that never help to get anything or anybody anywhere. Empty living is as empty of happiness as it is of anything else, and who would waste whole years in sowing seed that never, never brings a harvest? Certainly, if we never put anything worth while into the years, we will never get anything worth while out of them, and the time and opportunity for putting the things that really count into them can never be, as life goes, too long or too generous. And, that being the case, idling and emptiness do seem to be the most supreme folly of which we can be guilty. And if we do try our best to put the things most worth while into life in the end it will likely turn out to be just about long enough. But if we trifle and dawdle and linger along, and never attempt anything worth while, I think life will be found altogether too long in the end.

---

April is spent, and summer soon shall go,  
 Swift as a shadow o'er the heads of men,  
 And autumn with the painted leaves; and then,  
 When fires are set, and windows blind with snow,  
 We shall remember, with a yearning pang,  
 How in the poplars the first robin sang.

—ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN

*And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.*

—Exodus 3: 2

## EVERY DAY RELIGION

6/5/25  
RELIGION that isn't good for every day isn't much good for any day. If it doesn't stay with a man on Monday it was only a cloak and a mockery on Sunday. If it doesn't show itself in the home, breathing upon everyone therein a kindly and helpful and strengthening influence, then it will make a fine show in the House of God to very little purpose indeed. When we speak of every-day religion we speak of the only genuine kind of religion that there is. And it is its homely, every-day quality that will commend it to the world, and will in the end win for it the allegiance of the world. Religion is for every day. Its blessings and benefits, its comforts and sweet consolations, its guidance and its inspiration, are for the common-place days in the common-place lives of common-place men and women. It is, of course, its everydayness that proves it. Its ability to glorify things that without it would be very drab and uninteresting; its power to add zest and freshness and color to life; its wonderful faculty for turning darkness into light and bitter into sweet—these are the things that make it helpful and beautiful beyond compare. Do you find it so? If not, what do you suppose the reason is? There must be some reason. I think I would look into the matter a little. It could hardly be that your case was an exception to the universal rule. Might it be that you had got in touch with some sham or another?

Earth's crammed with heaven  
And every common bush afire with God,  
But only he who sees takes off his shoes,  
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries,  
And daub their natural faces unaware  
More and more from the first similitude.

—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after.*

—Philippians 3: 12

## LEARNING TO BE A CHRISTIAN

6/5/25

**L**EARNING almost anything is a somewhat difficult and taxing process, but learning the great things is nothing short of an achievement. And among the great things, learning to be a Christian is the very greatest—and the most difficult. With what fine scorn some people have been reminding us in these days how unchristian we were. And we had to admit it. But that admission did not cover the whole ground, for we were able to say in the next breath that we were learning. I positively believe it, the world is learning to be Christian. It is a slow, hard, uphill way, but it is actually being climbed. We complain that it takes so long, and yet, had it not to be measurably so, for the thing to be done was so splendid. If it were easier to accomplish would it be worth so much? Indeed, if it were possible at all, in the absolute sense, would it be worth anything? And whenever anyone turns on you and reminds you of the undoubted fact that you are not much of a Christian you can give him the answer that will please heaven itself if you are able to say, "I am trying hard to learn to be one." Not progress but the direction is what counts. If the face is turned in the right direction, and steadfastly held there, that is the one great thing that matters. If you are in the school and putting your whole soul to the task of learning—what more than that can the great master ask!

---

The world uprose as a man to find Him—  
 Ten thousand methods, ten thousand ends—  
 Some bent on treasure; the more on pleasure;  
 And some on the chaplet which fame attends;  
 But the great deep's voice in the distance dim  
 Said: Peace, it is well; they are seeking Him.

—ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE



*Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.*  
—Psalm 100: 4

6/5/25

## THE SPOILER THAT SPOILS

IT IS rather a remarkable thing, is it not, that thankfulness and appreciation very rarely deepen with prosperity. It is not true, as we might naturally think it ought to be, that the more we are getting the more grateful and satisfied we are. In fact the rule is dangerously near the other way. It is even said that prosperous times are the most censorious and critical. How in the world can we explain that? Or better still, how in the world can we prevent that being the case? For after all, dissatisfaction will spoil everything, whether we have little or much. Is it not possible to cultivate discontent? We start out in the morning with ever so little of it and are we not sure to find reasons for more of it as the day wears away? Our little seed yields a harvest of discontent against the weather, our friends, our station, our duties and a multitude of things. You know the reasons for discontent are always there by the multitude if we are in the mood to see them. But does not appreciation grow in just the same way. Begin with the faintest movement of gratitude and our eyes will slowly open up to a whole host of hitherto unnoticed blessings. There is a solid psychological law at the bottom of this thing, and if we would only act upon it we could prevent our own petulance and ingratitude from spoiling our lives. And spoilers indeed they are, as many a life has shown.

---

Just whistle a bit if the day be dark  
And the sky be overcast.  
If mute be the voice of the piping lark  
Why, pipe your own small blast.

And it's wonderful how o'er the gray sky-track  
The truant warbler comes stealing back.  
But why need he come? for your soul's at rest,  
And the song in the heart,—ah, that is the best.

—PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR



*Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be the glory.*

—Ephesians 3: 20

## THE DAY'S WORK

THE day's work, no matter how hard, does not get wearying while a man is fresh and vigorous, and life never drags with the buoyant, hopeful, overflowing spirit. If one could only keep fresh and vigorous and buoyant and hopeful all the time what an easy old world this would be! But is such a thing possible? Well, there was a man who almost claimed that he had discovered the secret by which it could be done. He lived quite a few hundred years ago, but he tells us about it in a letter which he wrote to some friends of his in the old city of Ephesus. It is a wonderful letter in a way, but the most wonderful thing about it is the manner in which the writer talks about the inexhaustible sources of his strength and courage and hopefulness and the exceeding riches of the grace that was given to him to live his hard and trying life with overcoming joy and buoyancy and masterfulness. And as we read he succeeds in convincing us that he has the secret; nay, more, he makes it clear that the secret isn't at all intended to be an exclusive one. It might be worth our while to read this old letter over again to see if we could catch a little of the wonderful spirit with which it is filled, and make that spirit do business in our own day and time. To live up to its ideal would surely be to make life great and splendid.

---

Oh, let me rise above the murk  
 Of little things that warp and cage,  
 And dwell upon the hills of faith,  
 With hope and love my heritage.  
 There let me touch a deeper chord,  
 And love life's flowers as they stand,  
 Nor seek to tear them all apart  
 Till only stems lie in my hand.

—OLLIE BARNES

*Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

—Matthew 7: 20, 21

## ON SAYING YES AND NO

THEY are great little words, those two, and vastly important. Indeed I suppose that in the ability to say each one in its right place, and with proper emphasis, depends very much of the success of living. Which one is the more important? The question might seem an idle one, but in reality it is not. To be able to say, *No*, at the right time and with the right inflection; that is, to be able to shut the wrong and evil and hurtful things out of our lives, is a great and a very necessary achievement. Multitudes of lives have gone down to failure for the lack of that ability. But to be able to do even that may not, after all, get us ahead very much. There never yet has been a great and good and uplifting human character developed on the basis of leaving hurtful things alone. To be able to say *Yes*, finely and opportunely; that is, to be able to build into our life the positively good in thought and ideal and achievement—it is only on that basis that fine character and enduring accomplishment of the best things are possible. To say *No*, therefore, to the things that tempt and allure and spoil may be very good; but to be able to ring out a challenging, constructive *Yes*, and fill it full of devotion to great programmes and endeavors and loyalties is much better. It is well and it is necessary to keep out of evil; but is it not better and even more necessary to get into good?

---

Open thy door straightway, and get thee hence;  
Go forth into the tumult and the shout;  
Work, love, with workers, lovers, all about;  
Of noise alone is born the inward sense  
Of silence; and from action springs alone  
The inward knowledge of true love and faith.

—GEORGE MACDONALD

*Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it.*

—1 Corinthians 3: 13

## SIDE-STEPPING

7/5/5

NO MATTER how skilfully it may be done, or how dangerous or inconvenient facing the issue squarely and honestly may seem, side-stepping is a very poor and, in reality, a very dangerous performance. Of course there is such a thing as a legitimate avoiding of an issue that one is not called on at the time to meet, but actual and deliberate side-stepping is a coward's trick that never gets anywhere and has led men and enterprises and nations into disaster thousands of times. If a thing is to be faced, and the job is somewhat manifestly up to you, the very worst and weakest and most foolish action you can take is to go around behind the barn and wait till time or Providence or some other man may work out what was evidently your duty and obligation. To begin with; neither time nor Providence nor any other man can well do what you ought to, and you will likely have to face the thing, or your neglect of it, again. And in the second place sneaking around behind the barn is poor business for an honest and courageous man. The way we face up to our duty to-day and to-morrow will just about decide our destiny. The challenge to meet life's responsibilities some future day has never brought forth much fruit of good. It is always easy doing things the day after to-morrow, and life's best and most vital things have never been very easy.

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And where is hell? And where is heaven? In some vague distance dim?

No, they are here and now in you—in me, in her, in him.

When is the Judgment Day to dawn? Its true date who can say?

Look in your calendar and see what day it is to-day!

To-day is always Judgment Day; and Conscience throned within

Brings up before its Judgment seat each soul to face its sin.

We march to Judgment, each along an uncompanied way—

Stand up, man, and accuse yourself, and meet your Judgment Day.

—SAM WALTER FOSS

*And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow every tree for meat, whose leaf shall not wither, neither shall the fruit thereof fail, it shall bring forth new fruit every month, because the waters thereof issue out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for healing.* —Ezekiel 47: 12

## THE TREES OF THE LORD

11/5/25  
IS THERE anything in all this world so interesting, so beautiful, so full of endless charm, as is a tree? As one looks at the trees these bursting spring days, with all their variety of bud and blossom, of form and color, of witchery and grace, he has a feeling as if he were standing at the very heart of the beauty and fulness and mystery of life. What lessons the trees do teach us! How strong and steadfast and rugged they are, and yet how beautiful! And how useful they are in all their beauty! And yet their usefulness is not merely of that practical type that often gets so much of praise and commendation. Trees not only grow fruit, and furnish lumber, but they give shade as well, and is there anything in all the world quite as graceful and comforting as that! What would life be next August to man and beast and bird without it! And is there any music anywhere however made that has the charm and soothe and loveliness that comes as the wind sifts through the trees on a summer's night! No wonder that our ancestors built their shrines in groves and at the foot of great oak trees. No wonder that trees have called men to worship throughout all the millenniums of human history. A man who would despise a tree, or fail to love and cherish and protect it, scorns goodness and beauty and God Himself.

---

He who plants a tree,  
He plants love,  
Tents of coolness spreading out above  
Wayfarers he may not live to see.  
Gifts that grow are best;  
Hands that bless are blest;  
Plant; Life does the rest.

—LUCY LARCOM

*But the Lord said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart.*

—2 Chronicles 6: 8

## THE DREAM AT THE HEART

11/5/25  
**A** VERY well-known and gifted preacher delivered a sermon recently to which he gave the title "The Work with a Dream at its heart." We do not know much about the sermon, but the title was surely a flash of spiritual genius. The only kind of work that is vital and enduring and really worth while is that kind of work, the work in the doing of which a man is haunted by the ideal, and reaching out after an achievement finer and better than anything he has yet known. So true is this that I do not believe since the world began any man ever did an enduringly fine piece of work who did not labor under the inspiration of a great dream. Let a man begin his life work without the throb and inspiration and power of such a vision-cherishing instinct, or let him lose it in the hard stress and struggle of the years, and he becomes, no matter what his sphere or calling in life, a mere "hewer of wood and drawer of water," one who does only common-place things and does them in a cheap and common-place and sordid way. Let us cherish that dream at the heart as the most precious thing of life, for it is the one thing that will redeem and make glorious all our living. And if it go from us, then surely is life bereft of all the things that will make it beautiful and worth while. What is in a man's heart as he works—that is what counts for everything

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Whence comes solace? Not from seeing,  
What is doing, suffering, being;  
Not from noting Life's conditions,  
Not from heeding Time's monitions;  
But in cleaving to the Dream,  
And in gazing at the Gleam  
Whereby gray things golden seem.

—THOMAS HARDY



*For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.*

—Colossians 1: 19

## A BIGGER PLACE

155-5  
IN THE earlier weeks and months of the war we heard a great deal about religion being played out and the gospel a failure. We do not hear nearly so much about it to-day. In fact, there is an increasing multitude of men who are about ready to declare that, in the wreck and ruin of the time, religion was about the only thing that had actually proved itself and the gospel the one steady beacon of hope that we have before us to-day. What has been woefully discredited has been our poor, insincere, half-hearted way of believing in our religion, and of living and preaching our gospel. We are beginning to see that what we need is not a bigger and better gospel for the world, but the grace and wisdom and courage to give a better and bigger place in life to the gospel that we have. Jesus Christ, His life, His spirit, His message, are not only the things that the world needs, but they are the things that are big enough and vital enough to supply the world's greatest and most insistent needs. And if we understood that, right down in our very souls, and then courageously undertook to live up to our knowledge, greater and better things would soon come to the world. The gospel is big enough, but my! we ought to give it a better chance. And if we really in our hearts believed what we said about it we would find it that bigger and better place.

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He is a path, if any be misled;  
He is a robe, if any naked be;  
If any chance to hunger, he is bread;  
If any be a bondman, he is free;  
If any be but weak, how strong is he!  
To dead men life he is, to sick men health;  
To blind men sight, and to the needy wealth;  
A pleasure without loss, a treasure without stealth.

—GILES FLETCHER



*It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.* —Lamentations 3: 27

## MAKING DEMANDS OF OURSELVES

A VERY important part of every man's business in life is to keep himself well in hand, and we haven't been getting along very well at that job if we haven't discovered how amazingly easy it is to deceive ourselves where any matter of self-interest is involved. To find what seems like a real good reason for doing the thing we like to do, or a seemingly satisfactory justification for neglecting the thing we do not like to do, is a fatally easy proposition. And for that reason it is the part of moral wisdom to get into the habit of being fairly thorough and exact with ourselves. The most of us can cultivate the habit of being lenient and charitable with other people and not run the least risk of doing or getting any harm in the process, but we are in real moral danger when we adopt the same attitude toward ourselves, for it is natural and easy to be exacting in our demands of others, and just as natural and easy to be over-lenient with ourselves. It is always safe to be pretty thorough and strict with ourselves; to make rather severe programmes for our own carrying out; to set the standard high and make no plans for weakening or compromise. Otherwise we put a snare right in the pathway of our own life.

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Ever insurgent let me be,  
 Make me more daring than devout;  
 From sleek contentment keep me free,  
 And fill me with a buoyant doubt.

Open my ears to music; let  
 Me thrill with Spring's first flutes and drums—  
 But never let me dare forget  
 The bitter ballads of the slums.

From compromise and things half-done,  
 Keep me with stern and stubborn pride;  
 And when, at last, the fight is won,  
 God, keep me still unsatisfied.

—LOUIS UNTERMAYER



*I do remember my faults this day.*

—Genesis 41: 9

## OUR MISTAKES

15/5/25  
SOMETIMES they entail very serious consequences, do they not? Even though we had no bad intention when we made them, they have a perverse way of overlooking that absence of wrong motive, and keep on dogging our steps long after we think we ought to have escaped from them. Of course that fact ought to teach us the necessity for greater care and wisdom. A sensible man ought to take his mistakes somewhat seriously, and let them instruct him for the future. But one of the most serious mistakes we can make in life is to take our mistakes too seriously. If we are guilty of that folly then our mistakes cease to be helpful factors in our lives, and become drags and fetters, checking and hampering us at every hand. In thinking of our mistakes, and their sometimes serious consequences, it is well to remember that there are great reconstructive and recreative forces at work in life that are very actively on the side of the man who is determined to improve upon a bad or foolish past. And that brings hope, no matter how great the mistakes have been. If wisely used even great mistakes may be made great remedial and reconstructive forces in our lives. The future can redeem even a very poor and foolish past.

Dost thou behold thy lost Youth all aghast?

Dost reel from Righteous Retribution's blow?

Then turn from blotted archives of the past

And find the future's pages white as snow.

Art thou a mourner? Rouse thee from thy spell;

Art thou a sinner? Sins may be forgiven;

Each morning gives thee wings to flee from hell,

Each night a star to guide thy feet to heaven.

Though deep in mire, wring not your hands and weep,

I lend my arm to all who say "I can!"

No shame-faced outcast ever sank so deep.

But yet may rise and be a man again.

—JUDGE WALTER MALONE

*But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up.*

—Mark 9: 27

## TURNING DARKNESS INTO DAY

15/5/25

THERE are some people who can do it, you have seen them, have you not? With their coming night seems to turn into the light of morning, and mistrust and fear and sadness flee away. It is a wonderful gift to have, the gift for giving confidence and hope and courage and great expectation. And there are some people who really have it, people whose personality seems to touch those with whom they come in contact with a vitality and life-giving power that is marvellous to see. And Jesus was preeminently one of them, the most remarkable of them that the world has ever seen. What strange, hopeless, heart-broken people, in the light and warmth of His love and fellowship, became beautiful and brave and strong! Men and women dared to believe and to do that which had seemed altogether impossible to them just because He was near and had spoken some word of comfort and courage to them. Indeed the whole story of His earthly life is very largely a story of His touch and influence giving new life and hope and courage and ideals and ambitions to men and women whom he had met along the wayside of life. You say there was magic in it, and that you and I cannot hope to be anything like what He was, but I am not sure that excuses us. If we were more like Him in spirit would we not have more of that wonderful skill? And what a gift it is to covet!

Folks say, a wizard to a northern King  
At Christmas-tide such wondrous things did show,  
That through one window men beheld the spring,  
And through another saw the summer glow,  
And through a third the fruited vines a-row,  
While still, unheard, but in its wonted way,  
Piped the drear wind of that December day.

—WILLIAM MORRIS

*And Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest.*

—Mark 10: 21

## BEING FAIR TO PEOPLE

**D**ID you ever stop to think that you can never by any possibility be quite fair to that man whom you do not like. You have some grudge against him, no matter for what or no matter how slight, but it makes it impossible for you to credit him with all the virtues he possesses and to not give him more faults and vices than he really has. We are far more likely to be just to the people we like. You remember how it was with the Master of Men Himself. Of course He saw the faults and frailties and blemishes in the lives of men. He couldn't help but see them any more than we can help it. But He saw virtues and potential nobleness that we very often cannot see, and the reason was that He looked on men with the eyes of a true Brother. We would have seen in Simon Peter a hot-headed, irritating, unstable enthusiast, nothing more. He saw elements of loyalty and strength that would have escaped us altogether. We would have looked so closely at the shady practices of that little man named Zaccheus that we would never have seen in him the makings of a true and godly man as He did. And seeing the good in men, actual and possible, how wonderfully effective He was in luring them on to better and higher things! And that is the only way to do it. We really ought to learn that lesson from Him. Our failure to learn it furnishes one reason for the failure of our efforts to help folks.

---

Through unknown fortunes yet to be,  
Beneath the stars, beside the sea,  
Between the birthday and the grave,  
Teaching the tender heart to brave,  
He woos our better from our worse,  
The Artist of the Universe!  
The undiscouraged Connoisseur  
Of priceless human character.

—PAUL SHIVELL

*Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.*

—Hebrews 10: 35

## TRUSTING IN ONESELF

A MAN needs a certain measure of trust in himself if he is going to face up to life at all successfully and usefully, even though too great assurance is one of the illest things to be seen along the way of life. Without confidence, courage is a very difficult achievement, and a man cannot live a life anywhere at any time without the demand meeting him very often for that staunch virtue. Occasionally you will hear men talk as if all the hard and demanding things had been done long ago, and that life now were only a soft and insipid thing, but nothing was ever further from the fact than such a conception as that. So far from the age of heroism being past, it is just upon us, and the number of things lying around to be done that require valiant and fearless souls to do them was never so numerous in the world's history. And a too-great misgiving and mistrust sometimes keeps some men from taking up those tasks who have every other qualification for carrying them through successfully. A "stout heart" is a good old English expression that always seemed to have a very full and significant meaning, and it surely stands for a thing good to have in this day or in any other. With it, difficult and impossible things look achievable, and a man goes out to do and to dare after the finest fashion. To-day, as all the way through history from the beginning, God has been seeking for the men with the stout hearts to do His tasks.

Trust in thyself,—then spur amain:  
 So shall Charybdis wear a grace,  
 Grim Aetara laugh, the Libyan plain  
 Take roses to her shriveled face.  
 This orb—this round  
 Of sight and sound—  
 Count it the lists that God hath built  
 For haughty hearts to ride a-tilt.

—ARTHUR T. QUILLER-COUCH



*And unto this people thou shalt say, thus saith the Lord: Behold I set before you the way of life, and the way of death.*

—Jeremiah 21: 8

## CHOOSING THE HARD ROAD

24/5/21  
AFTER all it doesn't take much to greatly brighten and beautify life, does it? A single word of kindness and appreciation has been known to gild a whole day with glory, and fill it with song that the angels would be glad to hear. We often dwell upon the fact of life's sensitiveness to pain and sadness and suffering, but the opposite and greater fact is much better worth thinking about. Why do we not think about it more than we do? And why, too, do we not make our thinking more effective? Life is so simple, when all is said, and its processes so direct and easy, that we can hardly be forgiven for a failure to make it something like what it ought to be. For instance, kindness oughtn't to be a very difficult virtue. Usually it doesn't demand tremendous sacrifices or self-denials. If we are not too preoccupied, and have learned to cultivate just the ordinary human feelings and sympathies, we will be able to measure up to most of its demands. And yet the world is filled with a multitude of unkind things that didn't need to be. And we often complain bitterly against life when one of the chief things the matter with it is, that we and many others have failed to take the plain and easy road that was right in front of us. Really the way to vastly greater human happiness is a plain one, and we can scarcely be forgiven for so stupidly refusing to enter it.

---

A little sun, a little rain,  
A soft wind blowing from the West—  
And woods and fields are sweet again,  
And warmth within the mountain's breast.

A little love, a little trust,  
A soft impulse, a sudden dream—  
And life as dry as desert dust  
Is fresher than a mountain stream.

—STOPFORD A. BROOKE



*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil.*

—Jeremiah 29: 11

## CHARGING GOD UNJUSTLY

IT IS an easy thing to do, and in these bitter and trying days many of us may be tempted into it unawares. It will greatly help us to guard against such a sin and injustice to remember that God does not govern the world as He pleases always, but as He can. What we please is an item in the situation that counts for very much, in fact, more frequently than we recognize perhaps, it is a controlling factor. His wisdom and grace and power always stand ready to enter any doorway of opportunity that men will leave open to them, but they cannot and do not thrust themselves in by compulsion. Sometimes we pray and pray and pray that God might help us when really the only prayer we need to make is that we might be made willing to be helped. What He does not do for us that would help and bless and strengthen our lives is what we do not let Him do, and what He does not do to take away the suffering and sin and sorrow of the world is what men's folly and wilfulness prevent. God's eternal purpose of good and blessing is the most persistent and pervasive thing in all the world. We ought to give it right of way and a good chance very much more than we do.

All as God wills, who wisely heeds,  
To give or to withhold,  
And knoweth more of all my needs  
Than all my prayers have told!  
Enough that blessings undeserved  
Have marked my erring track;—  
That whereso'er my feet have swerved,  
His chastening turned me back;—  
That more and more a Providence  
Of Love is understood,  
Making the springs of time and sense,  
Sweet with eternal good.

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER



*For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.*

—Psalm 8: 5

## FAITH IN HUMANITY

29-12-25  
**I**F YOU have lost it, do not blame humanity in general but just that small portion of it that walks around under your hat. Such faith is the normal and right thing for the man who is as he ought to be. God made the world, and God made man. Your lack of faith says that the whole thing was a colossal mistake. You would scarcely like to make such a criticism, would you? And if you have lost faith in humanity it is certain that your usefulness in this world of infinite possibilities for man is about eclipsed for the time. In fact all the good you will ever do in the world will be measured by the steadiness of your faith in those same infinite possibilities. God did not make a mistake, man is never a hopeless case, the blackest night will have a dawning, the golden age in human history is still ahead of us—these are the things to hold to unwaveringly if you would keep sane and strong and useful in the world. If you haven't faith in humanity, you can have faith in nothing in the world, for man is the centre of it all, and there is nothing else in the world that matters much. Whatever else in all the world you let slip do not slip your faith in man. According to your faith in him shall it be done unto you in all your efforts to help and inspire him.

---

Greatheart is dead, they say!

Greatheart is dead, they say!

Nor dead, nor sleeping! He lives on! His name

Shall kindle many a heart to equal flame;

The fire he kindled shall burn on and on

Till all the darkness of the lands be gone,

And all the Kingdoms of the earth be won,

And one!

A soul so fiery sweet can never die,

But lives and loves and works through all eternity.

—JOHN OXENHAM

*He shall deliver thee in six troubles: Yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.*

—Job 5: 19

## THE TROUBLES I SEE

WHATEVER you do don't get into the habit of being sorry for yourself. Nothing will spoil your disposition and make you an all-round nuisance to your friends much quicker or more thoroughly than an indulgence in that thoroughly bad habit. Of course you have quite a few troubles and difficulties, but, dear me, other folks have had as many and as serious ones and still have kept sweet and smiling and said very little about them. An over-indulgence in self-pity reacts on one and makes him as soft and flabby and egotistical as a petted child. Magnifying your tribulations and then sitting down and sighing and weeping over them is a very idle and foolish and unchristian thing to do. Such troubles as you have are not going to be greatly helped by being worried and grieved over, and then the chances are that you haven't big enough ones to be worthy of that, even if it would help. Stir yourself out of that mood of self and shun it as you would the plague. All the troubles you have had, or ever will have, are not worth spoiling your own soul over, and that is what you do when you give them a too-big place in your thought and life. Already the Lord has delivered you out of six troubles, surely you can trust that He will help you out of that seventh!

---

Idle to grieve when the stars are clear above me,  
When the bright waters bubble in the spring,  
Idle to grieve when there are storms to prove me  
And birds that seek me out to come and sing.

Idle to grieve, the light is on the highway,  
There are the mountain meadows to achieve,  
Beyond in the pass the airy heights are my way,  
Idle to grieve, glad heart, idle to grieve.

—DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT

*And the Lord said unto Gideon, by the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand; and let all the other people go every man unto his place.*  
—Judges 7: 7

### ARE YOU A QUITTER?

OF COURSE you have read the story of Gideon's band, but it would not do any harm to read it over again. It is a story with several good morals in it. There were twenty thousand quitters in Gideon's little army, nearly two-thirds of the whole muster. And though the great soldier needed men very badly, as it seemed, he sent every one of the twenty thousand to the rear. He was afraid that when it came to a pinch, and he was depending on them, they would fail him and throw the whole engagement into confusion. As he saw it, and we might add that the Lord agreed with him, he was stronger and better equipped without those men than he would have been with them. And, Mr. Quitter, that is one of the strong truths that this old story hands out to you—if you are not going to keep at the job and help to finish it up, the chances are that you will prove more of a nuisance than a helper. If you are going to quit when the pinch comes, you will spoil the job, and spoil it badly. Quitting is cowardly, mean, disastrous. There is no glory like the glory of going on. Of course it is hard and testing sometimes, but have you not found out that some of life's greatest satisfactions are got out of doing hard and testing things!

---

Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,

Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—  
Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—

Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she;  
Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death: if the wages of virtue be dust,

Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly?  
She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,

To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky:  
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

—ALFRED TENNYSON

*And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone;  
I will make an helpmeet for him.*

—Genesis 2: 18

## OUT IN SOCIETY

2/10/35  
“IT IS not good that the man should be alone.” In fact, the matter might be put even more strongly than that, it is very bad for the man to try to be alone. The unsocial life is unsatisfactory and insipid; the solitary, self-centred man is restless and wretched. It is as natural for us to share our thoughts and feelings, our joys and our griefs, as it is for the sun to shine its light, and when we break with nature in this matter we spoil life of its best. We have more tears than our own suffering can call forth, and when we bottle them up something goes wrong. We have more capacity for joy and gladness than our own little life and interest can justify or use; and to refuse to share ourselves with others is as great a folly as it would be for the flower to refuse to bloom or to shed its perfume. Unregenerate Scrooge is only an orthodox illustration of what an ingrowing life gets to be like. It is miserable and unlovely because it turns in upon itself. No man's pleasure or satisfaction is a big enough thing for any man to make a satisfactory and worth-while life out of. There is only one way that I know of to become completely miserable, and completely useless too, and that way is to make yourself the centre of everything and your own pleasure the one aim of life. Sharing life ungrudgingly may not be an easy habit to acquire, but my! how exhilarating and how satisfying it is! A man never knows the true joy of anything until he gets to the place where he can divide it up with some one else.

---

Self is the only prison that can ever bind the soul;  
Love is the only angel who can bid the gates unroll;  
And when He comes to call thee, arise and follow fast;  
His way may lie through darkness, but it leads to light at last.

—HENRY VAN DYKE



*For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours.*

—1 Corinthians 3: 22

## OUR GREAT RESOURCES

A LITTLE book I have been reading tells the story of a millionaire who went crazy and imagined that he was bankrupt. He thought that his resources were gone and that all he had to live upon was a miserable five dollars a week, granted him through the kindness of his creditors. Week after week through years, and until he died, he came to the bank and drew his five dollars, and managed somehow to live upon it, while all the time the million was within his reach, if he had desired to use it. The story has its very obvious moral for the lives of us all. Both earth and heaven have had their rich resources for our lives, varied and wonderful past all imagination, but we have lived miserably, not because we had to, but because we were foolish and did not ask for and take more. There has been sunshine but we have been content with darkness; joy but we hugged our sorrow; companionship but we dwelt apart; strength and courage and hope but we took them not. Millionaires of right we have lived paupers. How foolish! How utterly foolish and irrational! And yet how easy it seemed for us to do it! But isn't it time that we learned a better way, and reached out our hand to take a little of the fullness that God meant for us.

Not just this little garden with its hollyhocks is mine—  
 Its phlox, its pinks, its pansies, and its flights of columbine.  
 Mine is the park at Blenheim; mine the woods at Fontainebleau;  
 Mine the old moat at Warwick where the rhododendrons grow.  
 The roseries at Portland are mine too, and I shall keep  
 Their fragrant beauty always; mine the dazzling flame-drifts deep  
 Of glory at Magnolia; mine, beneath soft purple skies,  
 That Jasmined Creole garden where I watched the gold moon rise.  
 Mine all dear planted places—ours, oh heart, because we care—  
 We've loved our bit of bare, brown earth so much, flowers blossom  
 there.

—ANNE ARNOLD



*For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

—Matthew 12: 37

## THE ACID TEST

A CORRESPONDENT takes exception to what we had to say recently relative to the habit of finding fault. As he sees it there is not much chance of improvement save through criticism, and he holds that the fault-finder, though not usually a popular member of society, may be one of the most useful of men. We admit the possibility that he may be, but we insist that the chances are very much that he will not be. It goes without saying that the fault-finder must be sincere, and that he must have real ground for his complaining. And if we apply these two tests there isn't any doubt of it that the number of critics will at once be considerably reduced. But there is another test that is very much more searching than these. You may be an honest critic, and you may be absolutely sure of your facts, but in fairness you must ask this further question—will it help? And until you can answer that question with a good degree of certainty, heaven hasn't called you to your job of critic, and your fault-finding is likely to be an impertinence and a snare. And it must not be forgotten that for one word of criticism that will help there are a dozen words of praise and encouragement. It is very much safer to try these first. And certainly it is very much safer to get into the habit of giving these rather than the other.

---

Only a word! But know this, my brother:  
A word may bless, and a word may blight,  
May blot the sun out of heaven for another,  
Or lead him into God's own sweet light.

Only a word! But the power in it  
God and the angels alone can know—  
To break a heart, or by love to win it,  
To lift a life or to crush it low.

—EBEN E. REXFORD

*In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression.*

—Isaiah 54: 14

## THE ENDURING EMPIRE

IN OUR moments of doubt and fear for the future we can surely strengthen our hearts with this thought, that the brute forces of evil and unrighteousness have never yet set up any permanent kingdoms upon the earth. Iron despotisms and cruel injustices have established and fortified themselves until it seemed that nothing could possibly match or overthrow them, but something always has, and often it has been a something on the surface quite unequal to the task. Human history has not one single instance to bring forward of an empire of wrong and injustice and despotism persisting throughout centuries. No one could match the might of Alexander for a time, but how easy it was to match it after a while. It only took a few years, comparatively, to make the invincibility of Rome a joke and a by-word. If the history of the world has proved anything at all it has proved this, that the things which cut across the great spiritual principles of right, justice, and equity can never establish any fixed and fast empire in the earth. Slowly and painfully human society is being established on a firm and enduring basis as it is being built on righteousness and justice and brotherliness. As the nations are learning goodness they are finding a safe and sure way of life. And I am afraid that there is no other way of safety and security save as we build ourselves on God and those eternal principles of right which are the seat and centre of His throne.

Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,  
And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone;  
Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,  
Texts of despair and hope, of joy or moan.  
While swings the sea, while mists the mountain shroud,  
While thunder surges burst on cliff of cloud,  
Still at the prophets' feet the nations sit.

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

*So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.*

—Romans 9: 16

## A MISTAKE ABOUT HELL

HELL is paved with good intentions, the old saw tells us, but old saws sometimes hide more truth than they reveal. Such a hell as there is has a much rockier pavement, I am thinking. Whatever it is that spoils a man's life, and in the end leads him to the doom of a spoiled life, it is not his good intentions or his right purposes, this grim old adage notwithstanding. A good intention is such a good thing that I question if ever one of them will get into the pit at all, or even if the man who has one genuine one left in him will get there either. At least the man who has one such good intention left need not be hopeless of himself, neither need his friends be hopeless of him. The sorry performance you and I make is not the only thing the Judge of men sees, if it were, then might we plead for pity indeed. The fine acting we intended to do probably means much more to Him. Indeed I rather think that that good intention, if it be real and genuine, will fall as a good seed into some fruitful soil, to bring forth a harvest of beauty sometime, somewhere. A road paved with good intentions is a road to heaven and not a road to hell. A man needn't worry too much over his failure if he is able still to keep an intention for good.

Some lovely things I've tried to do,  
But failed, alas! to make the dream come true.  
In many a race I've fallen far behind,  
And heard the victor's shout ring down the wind.  
I've seen my shining castles sink and fall  
And leave upon the air no trace at all.

But this one thing I have with joy achieved  
Beyond the dream my budding hopes believed:  
I've placed a tiny seed within the earth  
And seen the living atom spring to birth,  
A growing thing, a promise of delight,  
A touch, a token of the infinite.

—LILIAN LEVERIDGE

*For wisdom shall enter into thy heart, And knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy soul.*

—Proverbs 2: 10

## THE WISDOM OF THE HEART

20/1/22  
GOD bless the practical, matter-of-fact people! What would the world do without them? And yet I am glad that we haven't a world full of them. That is, of the extreme type; the people who hardly quite believe in anything that they cannot see and handle, who have something of a scorn for mere sentiment, and think day-dreaming is utter waste of time—you know, the really "practical" people, who are proud of it, and cherish a somewhat ill-concealed scorn for the opposite type. A world full of folk like that might be a very comfortable world, and things might be always done up in it, but it would be at the same time a very uninteresting and wooden world. The things we can see and handle are not the only things, indeed they are not the big and important and interesting things at all, and the man who busies his whole life with them is missing the very cream of living. When it comes to scorning "mere sentiment," it is well to remember that it is the mightiest force in all this world, notwithstanding its sordidness that we hear so much about. Some people say that men will do anything for money, but history shows that money has been a very wooden and unattractive thing compared with mere notions and sentiments. The things that people may see when they close their eyes are the things that make life vastly more than the other kind. It is an utter folly to scorn them.

---

O world, thou choosest not the better part.

It is not wisdom to be only wise,

And on the inward vision close the eyes,

But it is wisdom to believe the heart.

Columbus found a world and had no chart,

Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;

To trust the soul's invincible surmise

Was all his science and his only art.

—GEORGE SANTAYANA

*It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.*

—Ecclesiastes 7: 5

## TAKING CRITICISM

31/3/25  
IT IS a healthy sign in a man when he does not bristle all over the minute someone begins to criticize him. It is generally an indication that he has learned a few things in the fruitful school of experience, one of them being that nearly every man deserves criticism once in a while, and another that undeserved criticism cannot possibly do any serious harm. If your self-appointed critic lays an undeserved censure upon you, don't fling back at him, at least not until you have thought the matter over. If he does nothing else for you, at least he may stir you up a little and thus prove your friend. Some folk who are denied the blessing of criticism go to sleep at their tasks. Others slide over and neglect their faults until they become their ruin. Really a critic is often a very good friend if we only have the wisdom and grace to let him be such. He is a very wise man indeed who can take criticism profitably and without any whining or resentment. Of course it isn't always pleasant, but where in the world did you get the notion that life ought always to be pleasant! You have barely begun to learn its simplest lesson if you do not know that there is real joy to be got out of its knocks and rough usage. And if you whine and complain against them—well, you are still childish and haven't yet become a man.

Do you fear the force of the wind,  
The slash of the rain?  
Go face them and fight them,  
Be savage again.  
Go hungry and cold like the wolf,  
Go wade like the crane:  
The palms of your hand will thicken,  
The skin of your cheek will tan,  
You'll grow ragged and weary and swarthy,  
But you'll walk like a man!

—HAMLIN GARLAND



*But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.*

—1 Corinthians 1: 27

## EACH COMMON DAY

21/3/25  
THE day of destiny seldom opens with blare of trumpet. The great crises of life come unsuspected and unheralded. Each day is a day of judgment, and the commonest and the quietest day may determine the character and the decision of the day we count the greatest. The unnoticed victories are often the decisive ones. It is not the wind nor the clouds but the silent and unperceived evaporation which determines the rainfall. Most battles are decided long before they are fought. The life of man is being fashioned into beauty or mangled into hopeless ruin by common, ordinary days. There may be spectacular days which fix themselves upon the memory, and appear to be of transcendent importance, but upon investigation we shall find that the real lords of life and fashioners of history are the uneventful and ordinary days which we too often despise. Nearly the whole wisdom of life lies in seeing the full significance of the common days and the common things. And so often we let bigness and noise and show deceive us, and count for so much more than they should. The things that live—they after all are the little and the simple things.

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Only a man harrowing clods  
In a slow, silent walk  
With an old horse that stumbles and nods  
Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame  
From the heaps of couch-grass;  
Yet this will go onward the same  
Though Dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight  
Come whispering by;  
War's annals will cloud into night  
Ere their story die.

—THOMAS HARDY



*Ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?*

—Matthew 16: 3

### IS IT TIME TO TACK?

STRAWS show which way the wind is blowing. And there is always some straw lying around and always some wind stirring. You like some things to-day better than you did a few years ago. Well, what sort of things are they? That is a straw. Look straight at it and see toward what point of the moral compass it is directed. You used to go to church but you don't go any more. Perhaps that is a straw. You say it is because the church is no good, the preacher has no practical sense, and all the people who go are more or less hypocrites. But look again, maybe the straw doesn't point in that direction at all. Perhaps the digit is directed right at you. You can do some things to-day easier than you could ten years ago. That may be a straw too. Are they fine, manly, kindly things? Or are they the opposite? Do they seem to indicate strengthening moral fibre or growing flabbiness of moral purpose? You can pretty nearly tell if you will look with honest eyes straight at that straw. You are not afraid to look at it honestly, are you? Well, that may be another straw. It may show that it really is time that you got the wind set in another direction. At any rate, one of the most stupid things you can be guilty of is to refuse to take your moral bearings and directions. And that you ought to do. And yet it seems to be about the last thing in the world that some people are willing to do.

---

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea.

—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES



## JUNE

*And June's a bride, a young queen bride. June  
wears  
Her dewy bridal flowers, her shining crown  
Of sunbeam-gold and radiant jewel-light  
As if the world were happy. Griefs and cares—  
Oh, June knows that—must weigh sad mor-  
tals down,  
But June knows, too, the darkest, weariest  
night  
Must end in dawn. And surely June is  
right.*

—KATHERINE L. JOHNSTON



*He hath made everything beautiful in its own time. —Ecclesiastes 3: 11*

## THE WORLD AS IT IS

WHAT is so rare as a day in June? Who among us in this northern clime has not felt that, and thanked the poet many times for expressing his feelings so perfectly for him? June is beautiful in itself, but does it not get its added touch, that makes it absolutely superb, by way of contrast? We are still near enough to the cold winds of March and the cruel disappointments of April to look into June's fair face with the memory of these upon us. Had we not had these others, this that we have to-day could not seem quite so fair and good. And is not nature in this but a parable, bringing to us great and beautiful truths touching the inner meaning of life? Inimitably blue skies and fleecy floating clouds looking down upon fields of clover, would not have all the charm they have to-day if we had had them unvaried throughout all the months of the year. So play without work, achievement without struggle, laughter that doesn't follow tears, would not be nearly so good. The world as it is is surely very good, if we would only open our dull eyes to see it. And what a pity it were to keep them shut and miss so much! As we read His life Jesus never failed to see the beauty and significance of the world about Him. This June day, what a crime it would be if we were to fail! But surely we scarcely will fail, if we open our eyes and look around us!

---

The desert was a place prepared  
 For weary hearts to rest;  
 The hillside was a temple blest,  
 The grassy vale a banquet room  
 Where he could feed in comfort many a guest.  
 With him the lily shared  
 The vital joy that breathed itself in bloom;  
 And every bird that sang beside the nest  
 Told of a love that broods o'er every living thing.

—HENRY VAN DYKE

*Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; where is the house that ye can build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?*  
—Isaiah 66: 1

## MAKING A SANCTUARY

26/7/25  
THE groves were God's first temples. Yes, it is well to remember that. We are too much in the habit of associating religion with a building. The early Christians worshipped God out under the trees or on the hillside beneath blue and sunny skies. It will not hurt our religion to get it outside in the sunlight; it ought indeed to do it a great deal of good. One impulse from a vernal wood may be a great help to worship, a greater help even than a magnificent stained-glass window. Our God is the God of nature, and where better can we adore Him than out of the midst of all the beauty and loveliness that He has made! But one can be in the midst of it all and never once think of worship. In fact it almost seems sometimes as if the blue water and sunny skies and shady groves helped some people to forget about God altogether. But really it will not spoil the sunshine to think that God made it, it will not take the joyous sparkle out of the wave to remember that it is in the hollow of His hand, it will not take the invigoration and gladness out of the woods to make them into a sanctuary in which we may worship the Maker of heaven and earth. Indeed I am sure it will add very much to our enjoyment and appreciation of all these things if we will see them as a revelation of the infinite love and goodness of God, and in the midst of them hold fellowship with Him.

---

White dove of David flying overhead,  
Golden with sunlight on thy snowy wings,  
Outspeeding thee my longing thoughts are fled  
To find a home afar from men and things,  
Where in His temple, earth o'erarched with sky,  
God's heart to mine may speak, my heart reply.

—GEORGE MACDONALD



*For none of us liveth to himself.*

—Romans 14:7

## YOUR INFLUENCE

26/7/25

PERHAPS there are not many of us who realize the full sweep of the truth that the great Apostle propounded when he said that none of us liveth to himself. Evidently he saw, as not many of us do see, that a man's power and place and worth in the world are almost altogether a matter of soul influence. It is not what men think you to be, or what you would fondly persuade yourself that you are, but it is how the thing that you really and truly are is influencing and persuading men, that actually counts. And it counts, in spite of yourself and in spite, too, of what others may say or think, in many subtle and far-reaching and altogether unreckonable ways. It is not so much what we say or do that tells, but it is what we are. It is a question of spirit, of character, and that is why it is so far-reaching and pervasive. The man that I am is reproducing himself in and imposing himself upon other lives, and I cannot prevent it, try as I will. What manner of man should I therefore be? That in reality is a more searching question than that other one as to what I should try to do. No effort at trying to do good can get ahead of my influence if I am not in reality good, and the attempt to make it do so is doomed beforehand to failure. Unless I am willing to become the thing that I would do, paying whatever price is needed to so become, all my effort will be very empty of result.

---

O! age that measures life by glowing acts, and scorns the power that throbs in living creeds;

All hero acts are born in hero faiths; 'tis purpose nerves the arm for valiant deeds.

What matters most is why men act, not what men do!

The greatest spirits oft are hindered from the deed!

Show me the man who shines in deathless acts—his immortality was pregnant in his creed.

—HERBERT ALDEN YOUTZ

*For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content.*

—*Philippians 4: 11*

## A LESSON OF CONTENTMENT

26/7/25  
SO FAR as I know, there has only been one man in the whole history of the world who learned perfectly the lesson of contentment. And strange to say he was a man of unbounded ambition and enterprise. When the man of Tarsus told his Philippian friends that he had learned in whatsoever state he was therewith to be content, he uttered a very hard saying. To be eager and pushing, and filled with the hunger of great idealisms as he was and yet to be content with all the necessary limitations and hampering providences of such a life as he undertook to lead—well, you and I will do well if we ever get anywhere near the fringe of such an experience as that. It takes the authority of a Paul to make one believe that it can be done at all. But there is one word in Paul's statement that gives us hope. He says "I have learned." The lesson evidently didn't come quickly and without a struggle. He learned it in a hard school and after much patience and effort and fierce fighting with that imperious will of his. Yes, Paul learned the lesson of contentment in the very way that is open to you and me, hard way though it is. If I say I cannot learn it, at best I can say that I shall try, and that, I am sure, will get somewhere. I cannot see why that great miracle in Paul's case might not be repeated even in the experience of such an unlikely person as I am, for the day of miracles isn't past, and the school of patience and contentment has never been closed since Pauls' day.

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Oh, friend, true happiness  
Lies in content,  
And sweet content  
Finds everywhere enough.

—GOETHE

*Be ye angry, and sin not.**—Ephesians 4: 26*

## THE VICE OF PACIFISM

26/7/28-

THE old story of Moses, the man of God, smiting to his death the Egyptian slave-driver whom he found beating his fellow Israelite, has always been a fascinating story to me. I have heard it questioned if the great man had done the wise and right thing in allowing his anger to so outrun his prudence and caution, but there was never any misgiving in my mind about that. In fact, the incident has always been a very instructive and helpful one to me in this way, that it has taught me that anger may have a perfectly legitimate place in the life of a good man. Moses' flashing eye and furious death-dealing blow has seemed to say to me that if a man doesn't react in anger and fierce resentment in the presence of injustice and cruelty and masterful evil-doing, there is something wrong with him, very seriously wrong too. Under such circumstances pacifism is not virtue, and cannot be made into the semblance of virtue, but is instead a vice revealing the terrible fact that the conscience has lost its sensitiveness and the soul has lost its courage. Anger may be a virtue, if a man is angry at the right thing and angry at it in the right way. And to be calm and placid some times is not to the credit either of courage or of conscience.

---

God has his use to make of angry men  
 Like him who, in the cruel Pharaoh's land,  
 Slew the Egyptian in a rage, and then  
 Buried his body in the desert sand.

And out of anger for a brother's wrong  
 Grew a great nation and a mighty throne;  
 And out of weakness, championed by the strong,  
 Israel from bondage came into his own.

God give us angry men in every age,  
 Men with indignant souls at sight of wrong,  
 Men whose whole being glows with righteous rage,  
 Men who are strong for those who need the strong.

—C. M. SHELDON

*And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, he cannot be my disciple.*

—Luke 14: 27

26/7/25-  
**THAT YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE**

ONE of the lessons that the times are teaching the Church, and the good men and women in it who are stirred up as never before to think of the Kingdom of God upon the earth, and how it may become a realized fact, is that our negations have bulked too largely in our religious life and thinking. We have been talking too much about what people must not do, and have magnified out of all proportion the prohibitions of our religion. And it has all at once dawned on some of us that we never got such a habit as that from the example or the teaching of our Master. He never once said or hinted that a man could become a Christian simply by not doing things. What He called for was men who would do things—great, fine, splendid, self-sacrificing things. His programme was of the most positive kind, and He was continually holding out before men the secret of a life that was broad and full, and virile, and interesting. And we never do Him a greater injustice than when we suggest that His religion is more interested in the repression than in the expression of the life of full-blooded, high-spirited, resolute, achieving men and women. And I am sure that many of us have been guilty of grossly caricaturing Him just at this point.

---

High Virtue's best is eloquent  
With spur and not with martingale:  
Sufficeth not thou'rt continent:  
Be courteous, brave, and liberal.  
God fashioned thee of chosen clay  
For service, nor did ever say  
"Deny thee this," "Abstain from yon,"  
Save to inure thee, thew and bone,  
To be confirmed of the clan  
That made immortal Marathon—  
*Virtue is that beseems a man!*  
—ARTHUR T. QUILLER-COUCH

*To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.*

—Romans 2: 7

## A HOMELY VIRTUE

26/7/25-

IT IS well to remember that there is a multitude of things, and among them many that are best worth doing, that can never be accomplished save by plain, straight-ahead, every-day, persistent sticking at it. It is all right to start the enterprise with a great flourish of trumpets, and some people dearly love doing that, but that doesn't get you along very far with it. Before it is finished, if it is to be worth anything at all, someone has to get down to plain plodding. There is always a stretch of hard road in any bit of worth-while adventuring, no matter of what kind it is, and it is what we do when we come to that that decides the destiny of many an enterprise. Nothing is ever all brass band and banners. Brilliancy and enthusiasm are good, but there is a homely old virtue that accomplishes very much more than either of them. See that you don't despise it. And despising it is a very common practice, for it is a rather plain-looking and unattractive virtue to many people. But the pure, fine gold is in it, just the same. If you are inclined to make light of it, take another real good look at it to-day.

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The man who wants a garden fair,  
Or small or very big,  
With flowers growing here and there,  
Must bend his back and dig.

The things are mighty few on earth  
That wishes can attain.  
Whate'er we want of any worth  
We've got to work to gain.

It matters not what goal you seek,  
Its secret here reposes;  
You've got to dig from week to week  
To get Results or Roses.

—EDGAR A. GUEST



*And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East: and His voice was like the noise of many waters: and the earth shined with His glory.*

—Ezekial 43: 2

## IN THE GROWING TIME

25/9/28

IN THE midst of all the green growing things with which the whole world is filled to-day, and all the matchless charm of the good earth that God has made, it would be too bad if any of us should stand with unbowed, irreverent heads, giving no thought to Him who is the Lord of all life and loveliness and perfection, and whose joy it is to reveal Himself in the beauty of the fields and the grace that is over all His work. To be able to stand out in the open in the month of June anywhere in this lovely land of ours without feeling some song of praise welling up in our heart toward the Creator of all the riot of loveliness with which He surrounds us, is to be guilty of a hardness and dullness of heart for which we should pray earnestly to be forgiven. The Lord is good—that is the song the whole earth is singing, and we ought to join our hearts and our voices with it in gladness and abandon. He hath made everything good in its day—can we not see it! Can we not feel it! Ought we not to make mention of His goodness and to sing His praise all the day long! Dear Lord, Thou lover of all growing, living, beautiful things, help us to see Thee everywhere and to love Thee alway.

---

And all these things seemed very glad,  
 The sun, the flowers, the bird on wing,  
 The jolly beasts, the furry-clad  
 Fat bees, the fruit, and everything.

But gladder than them all was I,  
 Who, being man, might gather up  
 The joy of all beneath the sky,  
 And add their treasure to my cup.

And travel every shining way,  
 And laugh with God in God's delight,  
 Create a world for every day,  
 And store a dream for every night.

—JOHN DRINKWATER



*There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more; And there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to want.*

—Proverbs 11: 24

### PASS THEM ALONG

28/7/28.

**D**ON'T store your old clothes away until you get boxes and closets full of them. They will do you a great deal more good on some other person's back than they will hanging up in your lumber room. You will not have the bother either of keeping the moths and dust out of them. And there are dozens and hundreds of things in your life just like those old clothes; you will get more good out of them by passing them on than by hoarding them up. The books that you enjoy reading so much, for instance. Let some other person who hasn't your opportunity get a look into them. It may wear some of them out a little, but they will be worth a great deal more to you though worn a little in kindly service, than they could be lying untouched on your shelves. But those things that you have that you cannot hand out in that way, they especially you must pass along if you would get the full good out of them. An unshared joy is scarcely a joy at all. Nothing spoils quicker than a selfish pleasure. The only gladness that is worth anything at all is the gladness that you pass along. If you haven't found that out yet, there is a wonderful discovery ahead of you. And it is a discovery that ought to add years to your life and unguessed joy to your whole experience.

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Art thou lonely, O my brother?  
Share thy little with another!  
Stretch a hand to one unfriended,  
And thy loneliness is ended.  
So both thou and he  
Shall less lonely be.  
And of thy one loneliness  
Shall come two's great happiness.

—JOHN OXENHAM

*I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.*

—*Psalm 52: 8*

## FEARING THE FUTURE

287/25  
**I**N HOW many hearts, and brave, buoyant hearts too, there is to-day a silent fear of the days that are to come, days that may tell of the tragic taking away of what seemed best worth keeping. And the one who piously tells us that that fear should not be there is only mocking human tenderness and love. The cloud that hangs over the future will not altogether lift, no matter what we may do. But it is possible, at least, to lighten its darkness a little. The fear may not altogether go, but even fear may be tempered with trust and hope. The God of the past and of the present will still be the God of the days that are to come. Life even then will not have got from under His hands. Is that not something to lay strong hold upon in the hour that our fear comes upon us? If the golden thread of Divine love and care is sure to run through all the days, then no day can stand out as one to be utterly feared. If the consciousness of His abiding presence lightens our way, then surely no cloud of impending disaster or loss can utterly darken it. We ought to take strong and steady hold upon that thought. It is sane and reasonable and profoundly Christian to do so. Not to do so is to deny certain great truths that stand as the very foundation of our faith in God and our understanding of His relationship to the world that He has made and governs with the word of His power.

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As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,  
 Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:  
 I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies  
 In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:  
 By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod  
 I will heartily lay me a hold on the greatness of God.

—SIDNEY LANIER

*If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.*

—John 15: 22

## WITHOUT EXCUSE

28/7/18.

ONE of the early disciples of Jesus made the statement that His coming to the earth had thrown such a light upon life that men were left without excuse for many of the wrong and perverse things that hitherto they had done with more or less of a good conscience. And surely it is a fact that the light has been increasing all through these centuries since, and therefore it must be true that more and more wrong has become without excuse or justification. But in no century of all the past has there been such an increase of light as there has been during the past few years. The excuses have had to melt away as mists before the sun. Hitherto men did foolish and wrong and unjust things partly because they didn't know any better, but in all honesty that excuse has been largely taken away from us. The clear, searching light of these epoch-making days has shown us the duties of brotherhood and right and justice, and if we do not measure up to them it will only be because of our perversity and selfishness and sin. If we are not putting our best into life, day by day filling it with faithfulness and patience and honest, unselfish work, what explanation can we make? The excuse that we haven't many opportunities and chances hardly counts, for all that is ever required of us is that we should make the best out of that which comes to us.

---

In the web of life are you weaving well  
Each thread, be it grey or golden?  
Is the wayside flower of each fleeting hour  
In the warp and woof infolden?

Do you treat with patience the knotted strands,  
And strive with a brave endeavor,  
Till the tangled skein is all smooth again  
To broider the bright for ever?

—LILIAN LEVERIDGE

*O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.*

—Psalm 104: 24

## THANK GOD FOR VARIETY

287/25  
THE long and glorious summer day would hardly be so full of joy and gladness did we not carry around with us some subtle memory of the cold and storm of winter. It is the fret and noise and worry of the day that help to make the calm, cool silences of night so grateful. How monotonous life would be if day after day there were skies without clouds, summers without a storm, the sun in its undimmed splendor throughout an unchanging year. Thank God for the sunrise that follows darkness, for the clouds that come and go and are never the same, for the storm and the cold that help to give zest to living, for the landscape that changes with every passing moment, for the green of the meadow that differs so from the green of the forest, for the great world that is so crowded with things no two of which are ever alike. There are few things indeed that we need to be more grateful for than for this great fact of variety in life. But we cannot be grateful and appreciative unless we see and realize. So one of the most constant prayers of our life from day to day should be, "Lord help me this day to keep my eyes open to see and my soul to feel." To live in the midst of it all and not to see and feel would be surely to be unpardonably stupid and ungrateful.

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Thank God for trees:  
Bird: blossom: breeze.  
But thank Him most  
Of all for these:  
Fun: frolic: cheers—  
Light: laughter: tears—  
And memory that  
Both sees and hears."

—EGBERT SANDFORD

*Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem.*

—Ezra 5: 2

## THE ART OF BUILDING UP

287/20

IT WOULD seem as if in these days for one man who is ready to say, "Come, let us all do better," we have a dozen men who are content with standing around and complaining how poorly everyone else is doing. And yet it is doubtful if that latter performance ever set the world forward even by one little step, while the former has been the usual if not the only way of real human progress. The world has had a regular epidemic of complaint and fault-finding recently. Perhaps it can be excused in view of all that we have been through; but it surely is time now that we were through with it, and got out of that purely negative and critical habit and into the constructive and the building-up one. The over-critical age is always an empty age, and the over-critical life is always an empty life. Inevitably the man who unduly develops the gift of criticism comes to the place where he finds his satisfaction in it, and looks upon the so-much-harder job of really improving things as an irksome and bothering task. And of course that job of making things better *is* so much more difficult. Indeed criticism is about as easy an occupation as one can cultivate, since in it one can make such a great show of wisdom and zeal, and its emptiness isn't apparent to everyone. But to bring one good thing into being, even if it be an insignificant one, is vastly more worth while than to explain learnedly what is wrong with the world.

---

Come, shoulder to shoulder, ere the world grows older!

Help lies in naught but thee and me;

Hope is before us, and the long years that bore us

Bore leaders more than men may be.

Let dead hearts tarry and trade and marry

And trembling nurse their dreams of mirth,

While we the living our lives are giving

To bring the bright new world to birth.

—WILLIAM MORRIS



*For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

*Romans 8: 19*

## IN THE OUT-OF-DOORS

28/7/25  
THE only way really to enjoy the great and beautiful world of out-of-doors is to see it as an expression of the thought of God. The blue and white of June skies, the shining of green leaves in the Summer sun, the iris in lush meadows, the white thorn in the thicket, the birds that chatter from a thousand swaying limbs, are not merely the expression of blind natural forces, they are God giving form and substance to His thought. Beauty, the wonderful and incomparable beauty of the world of nature as it is spread out before us to-day, is an expression of God and we cannot appreciate it at all until we realize that. And may we not go further and say that we cannot fully appreciate it until we get the idea that what He has made it is intended to give us some idea of the perfection and beauty to which He would bring all things. The God who made a June morning, made it for you and me, surely intended that everything should be beautiful and lovely in its time and place, and most of all the life of the man who was the crowning work of His whole creation. I am sure that must be one of the lessons He wishes us to learn to-day.

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Sometimes, when the grind of the city beats on my heart  
Like a brazen hammer with terrible blows,  
I think of a lost garden I knew in my boyhood,  
Filled with the scent of the rose.

And sometimes, when the clamor of life seems endless,  
And my soul is bowed with its weight of pain,  
I think of an old, still appletree in blossom  
At the end of a hawthorn lane.

Oh, do not smile at such simple memories!  
They keep us young, they keep the man-heart right.  
And sometime, we will all go back, contented,  
To a Garden, and a Tree, in a place of light.

—CHARLES HANSON TOWNE



*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

—Psalm 119: 11

## A SUMMER-TIME RELIGION

28/7/25-

SOME people appear to lose their religion during the summer months, but when they do I fancy it must be because it was not a very good kind of religion to begin with. If your religion cannot bear the sunlight, and cannot stay with you in the summer camp, or in any other out-of-the-ordinary, vacation-time environment, then you have a real good reason to doubt the positiveness and reality of it before you put it to these tests. Really if religion is worth anything, anytime, it is worth everything all the time, and I do not know of any time in all the year when real, wholesome, downright religion is more profitable or more enjoyable, or more worth keeping than during the months of sunshine and fruitfulness. Our fathers talked a good deal more than we do about *enjoying religion*, but it is just as well to remember that the religion that has come to be a real joy and reality to us is not likely to be left at home in the summer-time, to run the risk of getting moth-eaten like our winter clothes. I really believe if I did not get more out of my religion than some people seem to, and did not find it more congenial and companionable than they, I would leave it at home when I got a good opportunity, too. But religion ought to be the most congenial and companionable and natural thing in all the world, a thing that a man would feel at home with anywhere.

---

Where shall we get religion? Beneath the blooming tree,  
Beside the hill-encircling brooks that loiter to the sea,  
Beside twilight waters, beneath the noonday shades,  
Beneath the dark cathedral pines and through the tangled glades;  
Wherever the old urge of life provokes the dumb dead sod  
To tell its thought in violets, the soul takes hold on God.  
Go smell the growing clover, and scent the blooming pear,  
Go forth to seek religion—and find it anywhere.

—SAM WALTER FOSS

*Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins.*

—Lamentations 3: 39

## PAYING THE PIPER

8/7/25. IF YOU are determined to dance then don't complain if someone insists on passing the hat for the piper, or the fiddler as the case may be. If you don't like it, then you should content yourself with toasting your shins at home. If you don't enjoy it when people displease you for being a grouch and a knocker, then don't be a grouch and a knocker, even if you do find the rôle to your liking. If you don't appreciate the results of your folly then make up your mind not to be foolish. They say it is a cruel and unjust world; but if we only take the time to search the matter through, we will find that usually we have ourselves prepared the way for at least ninety per cent. of the troubles and misfortunes and disappointments that come to us. It not only doesn't do any good to complain, but it isn't fair and square to do it. Why should we find fault with the havoc the explosion makes when we ourselves lighted the fuse? The more sensible thing to do is to gather up the pieces and make up our mind that we will not take such chances again. It is a coward's business, surely to whine because we have to live on the harvest of the fields that we have ourselves plowed and sown with such industry.

This world of ours is an even place,  
That, like a mirror, reflects a face,  
As it really is—so if you will smile  
You will find that happiness, all the while  
Will follow you—and if you must frown  
You'll see the mouth of the world droop down!  
Just what you plant you gather in,  
And if the harvest you take seems thin,  
You've mostly yourself to blame; the earth  
Is ready always to give you mirth!  
Smile up into the morning's face,  
Remember—the world is an even place!

—MARGARET E. SANGSTER

*But let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.*

—James 1: 4

## THROUGH PATIENCE TO STRENGTH

28/7/25.

OVER and over and over again, through days and weeks and months and years, the everlasting need of patience is borne in upon us. We try to teach little children and they seem so tediously slow to learn. We have visions of the world's need and of what should be done to meet that need, and we imagine that everyone should think and feel as we do about it, but so many seem to us to be just dull and stupid and unfeeling. We plan great things for the world's good, but our plans do not seem to carry through, and our wonderful goal of achievement is never reached. Perhaps it will help us some to remember that the Great Creator and Father of the Spirits of men must be under the very same necessity as we are. Through millions of years He waited for the creation of a world that might become a fit home for man. And how He has waited for that man to measure up to the ideal that He cherished for him! But with infinite patience He has waited, working and cherishing the vision all the while. If down in our souls we grow something of that wonderful patience that He knows, might it not give an enduring quality to our life that to-day it lacks? And I am sure it would give it a sweetness and reasonableness that perhaps it needs just as badly. As the Apostle James seems to hint, patience is a kind of finishing, completing virtue.

Serene, I fold my hands and wait,  
Nor care for wind, nor tide, nor sea;  
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,  
For lo! my own shall come to me.

The stars come nightly to the sky;  
The tidal wave comes to the sea;  
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,  
Can keep my own away from me.

—JOHN BURROUGHS

*fold.*

*His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.*

—Habakkuk 3: 3

## THE LAVISH SUMMER

28/1/25  
**H**OW gloriously full of bloom and beauty these past few weeks have been! Thank God for June, the month of perfectness, to which nothing could be added to charm the eye and ear and soul of man. What kind of God must He be who made a June morning, just that He and you and I might rejoice and be glad in it? Yet, being the God He is, the world had to have June mornings, in which His love and our love of the beautiful might find its outgoing and satisfaction. As we have looked over green fields and up into the matchless blue and white of summer skies, we have over and over and over again thanked Him for making such a world of beauty for men's souls to feast upon. Often we have to admit that our souls are sordid enough as it is, but how much worse they would have been if they had not been lured and wooed out of themselves by the infinite variety of the beauty and richness with which the world is filled! How wonderfully has He trained us to the love of the things that are beautiful, and how rich has been His provision for the satisfaction of that spirit and instinct which He has called out! That it should have all been in vain with any of us is surely unthinkable. And it is almost as unthinkable that we should forget to thank Him for it. To live these June days without God and without gratitude ought to be impossible for any living man of us.

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Pour, pour of the wine of thy heart, O, Nature!

By cup of field and of sky,

By the brimming soul of every creature!—

Joy-mad, dear mother, am I.

Tongues, tongues for my joy, for my joy! more tongues!—

Oh, thanks to the thrush on the tree,

To the sky, and to all earth's blooms and songs!

They utter the heart in me.

—DAVID ATWOOD WASSON

*I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.*

—Psalm 17: 3

## THE WILL AND THE DEED

18/7/28.

**O**UGHT we to allow ourselves the comfort that lurks in the old adage, "the better the will the better the deed?" It would seem at times that if we did not, we had no comfort left to us, for our performance itself was a very sorry and unsatisfactory thing indeed. But we were conscious that there was nothing the matter with our planning and purpose, and if these had worked out right the results would have been wonderfully different. Well, that consciousness is something to cling to, that is, if we can be really sure of the stern honesty and sincerity of that planning and purposing. Before the bar of conscience or at the very throne of God a man may stand up with unblushing face and say, "I meant honestly to do infinitely better than this." And what that honest will planned, will count for vastly more in the final destinies of life than the mere thing that was done. Though we must remember that this is no easy-going way of getting rid of the responsibility for the things that we do. The good will is meant to eventuate in the good deed and it will so eventuate in the long last if it is firmly and sincerely and unflinchingly held. And the grace and persistence and strength and courage to hold to it—that is what makes life in the final analysis.

---

There was never a song that was sung by thee,  
 But a sweeter one was meant to be.  
 There was never a deed that was grandly done,  
 But a greater was meant by some earnest one.

For the sweetest voice can never impart  
 The song that trembles within the heart.  
 And the brain and hand can never quite do  
 The thing that the soul has fondly in view.

But enough that a God can hear and see  
 The song and the deed that were meant to be!

—BENJAMIN R. BULKELEY



*He shall be holden with the cords of his sin.*

—Proverbs 5: 22

28/7/25

## WHAT KEEPS US BACK?

THE man who first wrote that down knew life in a wonderful way. It is the wrong things we do and think that tie us all up in knots and hamper and hinder us no matter which way we turn. Occasionally, perhaps more than occasionally, we hear an opposite philosophy expressed. We even have been told of men who were too honest to succeed. Thorough-going integrity has been presented sometimes as a bar and obstacle. But that is devil's doctrine, born not only of a perverse but of a foolish mind. Honesty and right-mindedness never kept any man back from success, that is any success that was worth trying for. But dishonesty and wrong-mindedness have, times and times without number. It is when we begin to mix up with things morally wrong that we lose the directness, the clear vision, the steady sureness that mean achievement and success. Look life over from what point you will, and you will find that it has been sin that has tripped men up and held them back and spoiled health and happiness and hope. Truly we are holden with the cords of our wrong doings, and our sin is the thing, more than all things else, that has spoiled our lives. And in the very inevitable and unchangeable nature of things it shall always be so. God's universe is built that way, and so long as it stands, sin will always be but another way of spelling folly. Though goodness is never an altogether easy achievement, and often costs a great deal, it will never be a real handicap to a man so long as a God of justice has His hand on things.

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And fierce though the fiends may fight,  
 And long though the angels hide,  
 I know that truth and right  
 Have the Universe on their side.

—WASHINGTON GLADDEN



*And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.*

—1 Kings 20: 40

## THE GOLDEN MILESTONES

28/7/25.

LIFE is so long when one is young! It stretches away ahead through golden miles that seem to have no end, and there looks to be so much time for the joys and the pleasures that are to come, and so much opportunity for the doing of the fine, splendid, wonderful things that are to be later on. And who would willingly shorten that marvellous prospect by even one mile, or make it seem one little bit less flower-strewn and inviting! But time has a habit of shortening it all too rapidly, and the years sometimes make flower-strewn ways look rather rough and rugged. Almost before the boy becomes a man the road begins to take in a little, and soon glorious prospects and opportunities hardly seem so near and easy and inevitable. And one day the man makes the somewhat startling discovery that life isn't long at all, that its opportunities for fine achievement have a way of slipping by so easily if one isn't watching to pick them up, and that even joys and pleasures sometimes elude the hand that is not laid upon them in gentle firmness and insistence. Happy indeed is he who makes this discovery before it is too late, while there is still time for real joy and happiness and fine achievement in life! How often it is that we let the miles slip by so thoughtlessly and carelessly that all the fine, enjoyable things that were to be are still to be realized as the end draws on!

---

. . . . . for June is short  
 And we must joy in it and dance and sing,  
 And from her bounty draw her rosy worth.  
 Ay! soon the swallows will be flying south,  
     The wind wheel north to gather in the snow,  
     Even the roses spilt on youth's red mouth  
 Will soon blow down the road all roses go.

—FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should afterward receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went.*  
—Hebrews 11: 8

28/7/25 "NOTHING VENTURE, NOTHING HAVE."

THE old saying does not apply merely to risks upon the stock market or to adventures in the realm of real estate. It fits into many other relations in life, perhaps more truly and really than it does there. If you never try to do or to be anything worth while you never will, that's a pretty sure thing. How well you might succeed if you did try is, of course, another matter, but the absolutely certain thing is that the one sure way of failure is not to try. There is always a certain amount of risk in undertaking anything new or better or bigger than you have been accustomed to, but you will spend your whole life doing insignificant and no-account things unless you take that risk. If I am content to sit still and fold my arms or twiddle my thumbs then I shall never arrive, no matter what the thing is that I think I should like to come at. The world is built that way all along the line. It is the adventurous people who are giving us a new world every morning. The men who are risking are finding out new and wonderful things, and new and better ways of doing old things. From Abraham down to Scott and his fellow adventurers in the frozen South, every man in the history of the world who has amounted to anything or accomplished anything "went out not knowing whither he went," adventuring and risking and attempting impossible things in obedience to some luring ambition or ideal.

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Sail forth, steer for the deep waters only—  
Reckless, O soul, exploring I with thee and thou with me;  
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go,  
And we will risk the steep, ourselves and all,  
O my brave soul? O farther, farther sail,  
O daring joy, but safe! Are they not all the seas of God?  
O farther, farther, farther sail.

—WALT WHITMAN

*Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.*

—Acts 26: 19

## WHAT TO DO WITH THEM

28/7/25.

AMONG the most precious things that ever come to a man is one of those impulses or emotions looking toward something that is nobler and better in his own life, some haunting dream or vision of a good and worthy thing that he ought to be or to do. We all have them; and if they do not plant in our soul some vital seed that will bear its fruit of good in the days to come then our life has been the scene of a real, and often far-reaching, tragedy. These emotions seem very fleeting indeed; but they are likewise very precious, for we may capitalize them so that they will become the actual gold of character and achievement in some future day. It may be hard to explain how this can be done, but this warning may be given, that to allow the emotion to expend itself as emotion or to go from us unwelcomed is quite fatal. Mere feeling that has not added to it the active or sterner process of willing, or strenuously purposing, or striving to do, will never get us anywhere, and may indeed become an agent of vitiation and weakness rather than a source of power. To scorn or neglect an impulse to higher and better things is like saying *no* right in the face of God. What we do with our visions determines in the end fairly accurately what life will do with us.

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Egypt's night is tumbled down,  
Down a-down the deeps of thought;  
Greece is fallen and Troy town,  
Glorious Rome hath lost her crown,  
Venice's pride is nought.

But the dreams their children dreamed,  
Fleeting, unsubstantial, vain,  
Shadowy as the shadows seemed,  
Airy nothing, as they deemed,  
These remain.

—MARY COLERIDGE

*And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.*

—Isaiah 32: 3

## KEEPING OUR EYES OPEN

289/25-  
**I**T PAYS to keep your eyes open as you go through life. There are a good many opportunities in every day. The man who succeeds is the man who sees them, the other fellow is sleeping or dawdling along while all the splendid chances are going by. There are a great many nice and beautiful things along the way that a man ought to see, too. If we keep our eyes open there is a deal of joy and goodness in the world. A multitude of kind things are being done, thousands are filling each day with cheery, helpful service, there are many brave and faithful lives all about us. It will put something into us just to see and know that they are there. A June morning, a winter's sunset, the mountains in September, these, too, are worth looking at. The whole world indeed, is so beautiful, with such an infinite variety of beauty, that never to see it and joy in it is surely worse than stupid! And the excuse we sometimes make, that we haven't time, is perhaps the stupidest of all. The things we can see, even while busy with life and all its duties and obligations, are wonderful and glorious past all telling if only the eyes, both of body and of soul, are kept wide open. And it is so easy to keep them open if we have but formed the habit.

---

What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to see, when woods we pass,  
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

A poor life this if, full of care  
We have no time to stop and stare.

—WILLIAM H. DAVIES

*Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. —Proverbs 1: 17*

## THE WAY OF WISDOM

28/7/25-

WELL, you would think so, wouldn't you? For any self-respecting bird to be caught in a trap that it saw a man deliberately fix up to catch it strikes the old proverb-maker as an almost unbelievable exhibition of folly. But what is true of a bird he implies ought to be just a little more true of a man. And yet we would be afraid to say that it always was. The devil, if there be such an individual, lays traps for our feet, we know they are there, we quite understand the foolishness of walking into them—and yet we do. And when we do it once, and have to reap the fruit of our folly, we are still slow to learn wisdom; indeed the same old trap will often catch us over and over and over again. It isn't a sane performance, is it? But we have taken a few steps along the way of wisdom when we acknowledge that, and honestly face up to the proposition that sin and wrong-doing are only other ways of spelling folly and stupidity. That may not be flattering to us, but who wants flattery when he can get truth! Really we ought to be a great deal wiser than we are, and that wisdom should show itself much more consistently and persistently in our every day lives than it does. When birds can teach us wisdom, it is high time something was done. Especially when it is such a plain and manifest lesson. At least we should resolve that some of the worst and most palpable of our folly shall fall from us. A start on the way to wisdom may mean very much

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I wish myself could talk to myself as I left 'im a year ago;  
I could tell 'im a lot that would save 'im a lot of the things  
that 'e ought to know!

—RUDYARD KIPLING



*In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.* —Ecclesiastes 11: 6

## MAKING LIFE COUNT

1891/25  
THE opportunities in that direction are surely as great to-day as they ever were in any day of the world's history. There are splendid things that need doing, as many of them as the world ever saw before, at one time, and there is the same old danger that they be left undone unless you or I or some other man with his eyes open and courage in his soul undertakes to do them. There are lofty ideals that need lifting up and glorifying and exemplifying in the face of a world that tends to get unsympathetic and selfish and sordid. There are gospels of righteousness and justice and kindness that need preaching with word of mouth, but most of all with the stronger and more effective word of example. There are entrenched wrongs that need overthrowing, great causes that are crying out for fearless champions. The opportunities for making life count splendidly are indeed simply unnumbered. And what a pity it would be if, in the face of all that, we should dawdle it away and let great and kindling opportunities count for nothing. To make them count for much, isn't always easy even if we do try hard, but there is no hope at all if we do not so try.

But once I pass this way,  
And then—no more.  
But once—and then the Silent  
Door  
Swings on its hinges,—  
Opens . . . closes,—  
And no more  
I pass this way.  
So while I may,  
With all my might,  
I will assay,

Sweet comfort and delight  
To all I meet upon the Pilgrim  
Way.

For no man travels twice  
The great Highway  
That climbs through Darkness  
up to Light,—  
Through Night  
To Day.

—JOHN OXENHAM



*I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

—John 10: 10

## KEEPING LIFE INTERESTING

28/7/25

SURELY it is a folly, if not something worse, to let the zest and enthusiasm slip out of life. And it is such a needless performance too. There is so much to learn, so many interesting things to do, such a vast variety of concerns that one can busy hand and brain and imagination with, that to let life grow stale and uninteresting is certainly gratuitous folly. And yet there seem to be quite a number of people who do it. Of course they do it by letting the circle of their interests grow narrow and circumscribed, but that is the very thing no intelligent person needs to do, no matter what the circumstances of his life may be. Even if the circle of life to which we are of necessity confined is a very small one, and our duties keep us within very humdrum and commonplace limitations, the way out into the big, broad, interesting, stimulating world is very easy to find if only we have learned the art of it. People, books, nature, hobbies, a thousand things, will serve as doors out into a world where everything is fresh and new and worth while, and no matter where we live or what we do we can all find some of those doors, if we have only learned how to look for them. After all our world is just about as narrow as we make it, and if we persist in making it very narrow we can scarcely blame anyone else if it turns out to be very flat and uninteresting. That we are doomed to it is seldom if ever true.

---

To-day I have grown taller from walking with the trees,

The seven sister poplars who go softly in a line;

And I think my heart is whiter for its parley with a star

That trembled out at nightfall and hung above the pine.

The call note of a red-bird from the cedars in the dusk

Woke his happy mate within me to an answer free and fine;

And a sudden angel beckoned from a column of blue smoke—

Lord, who am I that they should stoop—these holy folk of thine?

—KARL WILSON BAKER

Good

*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.*

—*Ecclesiastes 9: 16*

28/7/25

## ENTHUSIASMS

SO FAR from being afraid of enthusiasm, the one fear that a man may consistently cherish through life is the fear of losing it. For when he does, life for him settles down into the flat, colorless level of uselessness. The best and the biggest things that have ever been done in the world have been made possible only through enthusiasm. We will win this war, when we do win it, only by its help. And the still greater accomplishment which will follow enduring world peace, will be achieved by men and women who, even in the midst of great discouragements and difficulties, are enthusiastic for world brotherhood and international righteousness. You say that enthusiasm has its dangers, and of course it has, but the biggest danger that you and I are in in regard to it is the danger of letting it drop out of our lives, and spending our days and years on the flat levels of ambitionless and unenthusiastic commonplaces. The mistakes we will make through our enthusiasm will be much more easily corrected than those made because we haven't any. And there is always hope that a man with any enthusiasms will see them tend upward to higher and better things, while with no enthusiasms everything is hopeless. By all means temper your enthusiasm with wisdom if you can, but remember this, that sometimes the wisdom that takes the place of enthusiasm is foolishness indeed.

---

'Tis not my aim to wear a laurel crown  
Upon my head,  
Nor is it dread  
That hot desire to be not trampled down.  
'Tis not my wish to labor long for Fame—  
Then sip her wine;  
This task is mine;  
To send my soul out greater than it came.  
—THEODOSIA PEARCE

*And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.*

—Luke 10: 32

## WHAT REALLY COUNTS

28/7/25.

IT WAS Robert Louis Stevenson who said that he was almost willing to say that the only sins which counted were the sins of omission. He felt that he didn't quite like to say is altogether, but he believed it was at least almost true. And he had a remarkably keen vision for spiritual values. But there was another who saw even clearer than he did who said almost the same thing. The story of the Good Samaritan that Jesus told is a story heaping up condemnation against a pious preacher and an equally pious church official, who did nothing positively wrong or wicked at all but merely failed to help a man in his need. The story of the ten talents is a story of stern denunciation of a man who didn't embezzle or defraud, but who hid his money in an old stocking and didn't make it count for anything. The story of the Last Judgment sends to perdition a man against whom there is only one charge, "Inasmuch as ye did it not." I tell you, my friend, and I tell myself too, the sin of doing nothing is one of the biggest and most fatal sins that any man can be guilty of. And I fear there are a good many of us who need to lift our ideals of goodness up to that Christ-plane of positiveness. This thing of merely keeping out of wrong wasn't what He held to be goodness at all. Doing nothing is the most dangerous thing any man can do. It will count against a man both in character and destiny, as no other sin can.

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It is not the well-warmed, well-peopled house  
That soonest falls to wrack. 'Tis the disused  
And empty dwelling, that with fireless hearth,  
Pictureless walls, and shuttered window panes,  
Coldly, untimely mopes into decay.

—SIR WILLIAM WATSON

*And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.*

—Psalm 40: 3

## A NEW SONG

1891  
**T**HE Psalmist tells us that the Lord had put a new song into his mouth, even praise unto our God. Probably that would be a new song to many of us too. We are interested in patriotic songs, in sentimental songs, some of us even have a fancy for comic songs, but that song of praise unto our God is not quite as popular as it might be. Suppose we cultivate it a little; or perhaps some of us would have to have the Lord do for us what He did for the Psalmist, teach us the song from the beginning. There are many reasons why we should sing it. He has been very good to us in very many ways, and life has had very many blessings that must have come from His gracious and loving hands. We ought to be saying more about these things than we have been. Yes, even though we may not make much of a hand of it at first, we ought to try to sing that song a great deal more than we do. And trying to sing it there is no doubt that He would help us until it would grow into a hymn of joy and praise that would fill our own souls with rapture past anything we have ever known. Even if there is no other song written that we can do anything with we ought to try this one. I am sure we could learn it.

---

How shall men know the power  
 Of a word that waits unsaid?  
 If the call is stifled in silence,  
 How shall the battle be led?

How shall men dream of the sweetness  
 Of a song that is never sung?  
 How shall they tell the magic spell  
 Of a harp which stands unstrung?

How shall men guess the fragrance  
 Of ointment hoarded and sealed?  
 The spikenard box unbroken  
 Can never its perfume yield.

—JULIA MORTON PLUMMER

JULY

28/7/25-

*After the May time and after the June time,  
Rare with blossoms and perfume sweet,  
Cometh the round world's royal noon time,  
The red midsummer of blazing heat,  
When the sun, like an eye that never closes,  
Bends on the earth his fervid gaze,  
And the winds are still, and the crimson roses  
Droop and wither and die in its rays.*

—ELLA WHEELER WILCOX





*But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbour. —Galatians 6: 4*

## STAYING OUT OF IT

29/9/25

WHAT a dirty thing politics would be if either side was even half as bad as the other side would make it out to be. But it isn't nearly half as bad, and when you read some awful tale of political perfidy in some party paper you can usually quite safely take out your knife and cut it in two and throw one half away, besides taking quite a little paring off the other half. In fact you ought to do that as a religious duty. Politics would be a pretty bad business if it deserved all the bad names that some good people who stand outside throw at it. We are even yet advised not to breathe the air of committees and to shake from our feet the dust of political platforms and to look upon the whole thing as a horrid affair in which we can take no part. But it is very foolish and wicked advising that. How can national evils be remedied or the good ends of national life be served apart from national action? And to refuse to be a public soul and to serve the greatest of all great causes, the cause of the public good, is to be in very truth a heathen man and a publican. The kind of piety that some men have that keeps them out of political life is not a wholesome kind. I wouldn't cultivate it, if I were you, for there is a much more healthy and useful type. If politics is any man's job, it is your job, and it is a coward's trick on your part to refuse to do your own work and bear your own burden. You can stay out of it, but you oughtn't to, that's sure.

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We need the Cromwell fire to make us feel  
The common burden and the public trust  
To be a thing as sacred and as just  
As the white vigil where the angels kneel.  
We need the faith to go a path untrod,  
The power to be alone and vote with God.

—EDWIN MARKHAM

*Now when I had returned, behold, upon the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.*

—Ezekiel 47: 7

## THE GOODLY TREES

THANK God for trees. Again and again and again it comes to us throughout the golden summer-time what wonderful and fascinating things they are, and how beautiful beyond all compare. For how many untold centuries has a tree been the symbol of beauty and fulness and joy! The story of Eden puts a tree in the midst of the garden planted by God. A tree grows by the side of the river of life in the heavenly city as pictured by prophet and by seer. Man as he ought to be is said to be like a tree by the waters, growing strong and straight and beautiful. All the way down through the years and back to the dawn of history men have thought of a tree as the type of the goodness of heaven to earth and to the men who live upon it. What trees must have meant to men in the long history of the race for them to have had the unique place in their imagination they have had. And what do they not mean to men even down to this last day! Perhaps we have failed to appreciate trees just quite as we should; if so we have overlooked one of the most wonderful, most beautiful, most altogether charming gifts that God has bestowed. And perhaps, too, we have somewhat missed the lesson of the tree, a lesson that shows us how usefulness and strength may be combined with charm and beauty. Truly what joyous, lovely friends of man are the trees!

---

He who plants a tree

He plants love.

Tents of coolness spreading out above

Wayfarers he may not live to see.

Gifts that grow are best;

Hands that bless are blessed.

Plant—life does the rest!

Heaven and earth help him who plants a tree,

And his work its own reward shall be.

—LUCY LARCOM

*Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.*

—*Psalm 37: 7*

## A GOOD REST CURE

IT IS found in a very old-fashioned book, but really it is quite modern and up-to-date, scientific if you will. "Rest in the Lord," the formula reads. Have you ever tried it? I commend it highly. So also do many others whose judgment you ought to value. It will do you much more good than either the mountains or the sea shore. You know, the matter with you is not that you have been working too hard, or are bearing too heavy a load of responsibility and duty. The real trouble is that you are carrying around with you too many anxieties and worries about yourself, and other people, and the whole world in general. If you could roll these all off once in a while and get an unburdened, fresh, sane outlook upon life in general, and your own life in particular, the tension would leave you and you would find rest and refreshment right down in your very soul. The man who wrote that old recipe knew life to its very core and reality, and spoke out of an experience that sounded the very depths. God is the soul's rest, man's only true sanctuary. If you haven't found that out yet the great discovery of life still awaits you. And life's real joy and satisfaction and sufficiency are still to be found. Strange that men should miss the one thing of all things that they should not miss! Strange that men should go all the way through life carrying the one kind of burden that they should not carry, and bearing the one load that was never meant for them!

---

Drop thy still dews of quietness,  
Till all our strivings cease;  
Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of thy peace.

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

*The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day . . .  
Therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days  
of our life in the house of the Lord.* —Isaiah 38: 19, 20

### BETTER PRACTISE A BIT

THE man who has not learned how to be at least measurably happy in this world does not stand a chance of ever getting to any other world where he will be. If we are sour and ill-tempered and fault-finding and short-grained all our life through on this planet, can we reasonably expect ever to get to any other where we will naturally and of necessity settle down to be sweet and smiling and seraphic? It doesn't look reasonable, does it? We sing about golden streets and jasper walls, but will these make us happy if we haven't learned the art. After all this is a very good world to be happy in, and if we cannot be, isn't it a bit unreasonable to expect that the minute we touch the heavenly shore we will start in to sing like an archangel and be happy for ever and for ever and for ever? If we haven't learned to appreciate this world are we not presuming a little in being so sure that we will know how to appreciate and enjoy any other? Is it not a reasonable proposition to suggest that one of the very best ways of getting ready to be happy in any other world is, diligently and faithfully, to practise the habit of being happy in this? In fact I fail to see how there can possibly be any other way. Heaven itself can have no magic skill for turning discontented, peevish, sour-visioned folk into singing, joyous, hopeful ones; at least I cannot see how it can. Does such a suggestion look reasonable?

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Since I am coming to that holy room  
When with the choir of saints for evermore  
I shall be made Thy music; as I come,  
I tune the instrument here at the door,  
And what I must do then, think here before.

—JOHN DONNE.

*For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.*

—*Psalm 8: 5*

### A LITTLE LOWER

THERE is one of the great lessons that the war taught us that we ought never to forget; in fact we ought to hearten our souls with the thought of it every day of our lives. Men, ordinary men, very ordinary men, even very unattractive men, are capable of courage, self-forgetfulness, and high idealism in a way that we had not dreamed of before. The thing comes more naturally and easily and instinctively to them, given a great call and occasion, than we had ever thought possible. That truth was revealed over and over again during the great struggle, and to many a man it was one of the most inspiring revelations that the war made. Perhaps it wasn't greatly to our credit that we marvelled so at it. All the way along through history it has been one of the failings of human nature that it has thought too meanly of itself. Men have refused to see the divinity in man and have insisted that human nature was most human when it was weak and failing. If we will only take this lesson to heart and never forget it, this will be a new day in human history. Man is a son of God, and Jesus Christ is the illustration of what he may and ought to be. He was made only a little lower than the angels. He was intended for great and splendid things. He has it in him to achieve. Do you get the splendid inspiration of that?

---

We drop a seed into the ground,  
A tiny, shapeless thing, shrivelled and dry,  
And, in the fulness of its time, is seen  
A form of peerless beauty, robed and crowned  
Beyond the pride of any earthly queen,  
Instinct with loveliness, and sweet and rare,  
A perfect emblem of its Maker's care.

This from a shrivelled seed?—  
Then may man hope indeed.

—JOHN OXENHAM



*The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets.*

—Proverbs 26: 13

## THE LIONS IN THE WAY

THERE are always a great many dangers and difficulties just ahead, are there not? And undoubtedly it is the part of wisdom to keep a somewhat watchful eye for them, and to do what we reasonably can to be ready to meet them. But isn't it also true that we see some lions in the path ahead that will not be nearly so dangerous-looking when we get up to them; perhaps, indeed, they will have disappeared altogether. And isn't it true, too, in a general way, that there are quite enough people busy at the job of pointing them out, and dilating upon the dangers that they suggest? To-morrow always has had a habit of looking threatening and dangerous to some people. How often have we been reminded that, though the Church had come through her tribulations so triumphantly in the past, just ahead collapse and ruin seemed to threaten? Even those people who are hopeful for the distant future sometimes see to-morrow's difficulties big and dangerous. Now, not to see to-morrow's dangers at all would be stupidly foolish, but to see them too big and too threatening would be just as foolish. Often the lions are not as big as they look, and the chances are that, if we go courageously ahead, we will even get safely past to-morrow. It is safe to reckon on that, at least.

But wherefore do you droop? why look you sad?  
Be great in fact, as you have been in thought;  
Let not the world see fear and sad distrust  
Govern the motion of a kingly eye;  
Be stirring as the time; be fire with fire;  
Threaten the threatener, and outface the brow  
Of bragging horror; so shall inferior eyes,  
That borrow their behaviors from the great,  
Grow great by your example; and put on  
The dauntless spirit of resolution;  
Show boldness and aspiring confidence.

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



*Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear  
for the time to come?*

—Isaiah 42: 23

## BEYOND RECALL

LIFE has its tragedies in many ways, but the saddest of them all is the tragedy that didn't need to have come. To be caught up in the sweep of things and have to suffer for what seemed inevitable is endurable, but to have to suffer for that which our own folly and neglect and stupidity has brought upon us is hard, for one thing because it is humiliating. If our eyes had only been open to the opportunity when it was passing we would not have now to suffer from all that the neglect of the opportunity involved, but we were so stupid and short-sighted, and it is that thought that adds its unendurable weight to our burden. If we had appreciated education when we had the opportunity of securing it, our life would not now be hampered as it is. If we had been wise enough to understand and hold our friend when he was ours, we would not to-day so sadly miss him out of our life. If we hadn't been so spendthrift when life was flush, we would not now want as we do. Yes, these tragedies that didn't need to happen, and these calamities that we stupidly or foolishly invited, are very hard to stand. And yet, there is this to be remembered, the opportunities that we have let slip, and that have gone beyond recall, are not the only ones we will have. Tomorrow again will be big with opportunity if we have only learned our lesson from the past. There are still very many things that are not beyond recall.

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The birds came, but my eyes were sealed;  
The wind flowers danced about my feet;  
From leafy dell and smiling field  
The vernal airs blew sweet.  
Yet deaf and blind, with spirit bleak,  
I passed upon my stolid way;  
But when the first snowflake smote my cheek,  
I mourned for my lost May.

—DORIS KENYON

## THE BIRTH OF HAPPINESS

IT MAY give some of us a new thought of the Apostle Paul to read of his giving that advice to his Ephesian friends about singing and making melody in their hearts. Whatever else he was he wasn't a sober-faced, kill-joy kind of Christian, was he? The dictionary tells us that a melody is a tuneful poem or song arranged to music. Well now, some of us can play nice melodies upon musical instruments, and sing them over more or less effectively with our voices, but what does Paul mean by making melody in our hearts? How can you set that tuneful song to music in your heart and have it echo to that charm and sweetness? And he seems to hint that you can do that thing deliberately; he doesn't say that if anything happens to make you happy you must be sure to let that happiness bubble over, but he actually advises you to make the happiness yourself. That is, he seems to hint that happiness can be made to order, and who ever heard of such a thing as that! And yet Paul was a very wise man, and the idea that he should make a very radical psychological blunder doesn't seem likely. Suppose a man should start in to obey Paul's first advice, and begin to sing—not too loudly so as to disturb his neighbor, but quietly and to himself—some timely song with cheering words, what would happen? Are not the chances good that he would soon get the melody into his heart? Paul may be right. I believe I will put him to the test some day very soon.

---

Dear the Bluebird's dewy warble, passing dear the evening strain  
Of the Hermit and the Veery; but within my heart hath lain  
Deeper still the voice of Robin, Robin singing in the rain.

Oh, my Robin, mellow-hearted, not a ripened note in vain.  
I will tune my pipe to yours, dear, slender though its one refrain;  
Happiness is born of singing, just of singing in the rain.

—ELLA GILVERT IVES

*Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.*

—Matthew 6: 25

## LEAVE YOUR WORRIES BEHIND

THAT is, when you go on your holidays, if you are so fortunate as to have the great privilege of having any. Of all foolish places in the world to carry around a load of worry and care, a summer cottage or a holiday jaunt looks absolutely the most foolish. With that burden on you the chances of your getting any real good out of your change or rest is about one in ten thousand. But, come to think of it, if it is foolish to carry your care around with you when you are on your holidays, it must be doubly foolish to bring it back with you on your return. When you are on your vacation you probably haven't much else to do but nurse your troubles, but when you come back you are faced at once with a hundred duties. No, I do not believe it is a wise or sensible thing to carry around a load of worry anywhere, at any time. It looks as if more human happiness had been spoiled, and more useful lives wrecked and ruined, by anxiety and care than by any other cause. And no matter what excuses you find for yourself, worry is not a necessity in your life any more than it was in the life of Jesus. A whole section of His wonderful Sermon centres around the injunction, "Be not anxious," and the advice He gave He lived up to. And He certainly implies that you and I can too.

---

The little cares that fretted me,  
I lost them yesterday,  
Among the fields above the sea,  
Among the winds at play,  
Among the lowing of the herds,  
The rustling of the trees  
Among the singing of the  
birds,  
The humming of the bees.

The foolish fears of what might  
be,  
I cast them all away,  
Among the clover-scented grass,  
Among the new-mown hay—  
Among the rustling of the corn,  
Where drowsy poppies nod,  
Where ill thoughts die and good  
are born  
Out in the fields with God.  
—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

*Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.*

—Matthew 3: 8

### BETTER WIPE IT UP

THERE is no use crying over spilt milk. Yes, but there is something that ought to be done with it. You can't gather it back into the glass again very satisfactorily, but the quicker you wipe it up the less likely it is to stain the carpet. The mistakes that in our folly and carelessness we so often make can't exactly be unmade, and it is an awful waste of nervous force to brood over them, but in the great majority of cases we can do something by way of remedy and atonement, and the sooner we get at it the better. I know a man who spent as much vital force worrying over the fortune he had lost by foolish investment as would, if properly applied, have won him another one. And he is only a type. Many of us do that same thing over our mistakes. We shed quarts of tears over them, instead of reaching for the dishcloth and making every effort we can to clean things up as good as ever. But that latter is the only sensible thing to do, and it opens the way to at least a partial remedy no matter of what kind the mistake has been. Don't cry over spilt milk. That would be an exceedingly childish thing to do. But do not neglect to wipe it up at once. What we did yesterday may have been foolish, but what counts is what we do to-day. And it still remains that one of the worst things we can do to-day is to worry over what we did yesterday.

---

The past is written! Close the book  
On pages sad and gay;  
Within the future do not look,  
But live to-day—to-day.

'Tis this one hour that God has given;  
His Now we must obey;  
And it will make our earth his heaven  
To live to-day—to-day.

—LYDIA AVERY COONLEY WARD

*So run that ye may attain.*

—1 Corinthians 9: 24

## A GOOD LOSER

IT IS a good thing to be a good loser, but it isn't an easy thing, as most of us have found out. To step up to the fellow who has won, while we ourselves have been back in the unlisted crowd of "also rans," and congratulate him heartily and without any false note, either in our voice or in our heart, isn't always the easiest performance in the world. It is good for us to try to do it, however, even if we are not able to in the most graceful fashion. But smiling on the victor, or joking over our own defeat, isn't all there is in being a good loser. We lose sometimes not because some other fellow wins, but just because we lose. And what we do over that kind of failure is mightily important. There are a good many dead-failures and half-successes in life because men have been willing to lose too easily. They were too good losers. Failure wasn't a serious enough matter with them, and success wasn't a big enough thing. Sometimes to lose easily and light-heartedly is to be a very poor loser, is not to be a real good sport. If the game of life is worth playing, it is worth winning. But what is it to win? The answer there is vital. Perhaps there is no matter that we ought to look into more carefully and honestly than that one of success. It isn't always at all what it seems to be. And a seeming success that is really a failure is often one of the very worst kind of failures.

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Speak, History! Who are Life's victors? Unroll thy long annals  
 and say,  
 Are they these who the world called the victors, who won the success  
 of a day?  
 The martyrs, or Nero? The Spartans, who fell at Thermopylae's  
 tryst,  
 Or the Persians and Xerxes? His judges or Socrates? Pilate or  
 Christ?

—WILLIAM WETMORE STORY



*Confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.*

—Acts 14: 22

## MAKING LIFE TOO EASY

YOU remember how Jeroboam tried to do it, in the old story in the Book of Kings. "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem," he told the revolting ten tribes, as he set up his strange shrines in Bethel and in Dan. And undoubtedly it seemed quite a reasonable argument to them. But the sequel to the story indicates that the effort to make Israel's religion easy very decidedly spoiled it. And, if we mistake not, that is nearly always the result of such an effort. Of all things in the world a religion without any iron and strength and courage in it is the most insipid and the most hopeless. And is the lackadaisical, soft-spirited life any better? The folk who run away from things, who insist on taking the easy and the pleasant path, who refuse to set up high ideals in anything because they make such demands of one—what shall we say of them? And the strange thing seems to be that running away from hard things does not in reality help to make life easy at all. But facing up to them, resolutely and stout-heartedly, does. Setting one's face to the hard thing that one ought to do somehow puts strength and fibre into the soul, and after that hard things become easy.

---

Creation's Lord, we give Thee thanks,  
That this Thy world is incomplete;  
That battle calls our marshalled ranks;  
That work awaits our hands and feet.

Beyond the present sin and shame  
Wrong's bitter, cruel, scorching blight,  
We see the beckoning vision flame,  
The blessed Kingdom of the Right.

What though the Kingdom long delay,  
And still with haughty foes must cope!  
It gives us that for which we pray,  
A field for toil and faith and hope.

—WILLIAM DEWITT HYDE



*Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* —Matthew 5: 16

### BY EXAMPLE

FOR the institution, as for the individual, the effective way of teaching is by example. For instance, if the Church is to teach democracy in this new day she must herself be democratic, a Church of the people. If she would teach brotherhood, justice, the broad vision, kindness, charity, the fellowship of all men in love and service, she must illustrate these great ideas in her own life, and illustrate them so outstandingly that all men who look will not miss the lesson. The trouble is that it is so much easier to talk than it is to live. It is that fatal facility for talk that has spoiled a good many enterprises. We give so much energy to it that we have little left for anything else, and having talked we get the notion that we have done something worth while. How would it be if we stopped talking about what we are going to do and be, and started right in to realize our programme in actual service and living? That is a drastic proposition, but I make it in all seriousness. And one thing is sure, that actual service and living is the only thing that will ever count; and it is that only that men will judge us by. In the long run if we do not teach by example we will not teach at all

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You ask not whence we came nor where we went;  
That we were spent and famished—that you saw.  
You led us through your door to all content;  
What is your law?

You brought cool waters for our hands and feet,—  
We whom the road had broken with its rods.  
You poured the wine,—You bade us rest and eat.  
Who are your gods?

No little words our gratitude may fit;  
Parting we lean to kiss your garment's hem.  
Tell us your law that we may honor it;  
Name us your gods that we may worship them.

—THEODOSIA GARRISON

*Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.* —Joel. 2: 28

## A WELCOME FOR NEW IDEAS

THE physiologist has told us that very few men can ever entertain a new idea after they are fifty years of age. But physiologists are not infallible any more than other men are, and it should be the accepted duty of every man who is rubbing along toward the half century mark to show them how utterly astray they are in this matter. It is true that they can find many cases to illustrate their theory, and we really believe that that is one of the uncomfortable things the matter with this old world of ours—there are too many of them. We sing of the virtue and blessedness of sweet content, but sometimes we forget that there is another side to the matter. It is the new ideas, the dissatisfaction with what has been, the outward and upward striving, that get the world ahead. And if we have got to the place where everything that is new seems wrong and dangerous, we have ceased to count for much in the grand march of human progress. There is such a thing as divine discontent; there is a dreaming and longing and restlessness that is born of the Spirit of God, and these are to be cherished as most precious and vital things.

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When man's dim eye demanded light,  
 The light he sought was born—  
 His wish, a Titan, scaled the height  
 And flung him back the morn!

From deed to dream, from dream to deed,  
 From daring hope to hope,  
 The restless wish, the instant need,  
 Still lashed him up the slope!

. . . . .  
 I sing no governed firmament,  
 Cold, ordered, regular—  
 I sing the stinging discontent  
 That leaps from star to star.

—DON MARQUIS

*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

—Isaiah 11: 9

## WE CAN HAVE IT

WHO has not heard the question pathetically asked, why it was that we could not have in the days of peace the same spirit of comradeship, heroism, and self-sacrifice that we had during the war? The answer is that we can have it, measurably at least. And we can have it whenever we desire it badly enough. We can have it where you and I live, and within the whole range of the circle where our influence is felt. And if we have it there, genuine, vital, strong, in the very nature of the case it will spread and enlarge itself as every day goes by. Often we spend time bemoaning the hardness and sordidness and self-seeking of the world, that we might use to far better advantage in searching for these things within our own lives. And when we fully make up our minds that, by the infinite grace of God, we ourselves will be a true comrade to every brother man; we will face all of our life's duties and responsibilities with courage and determination; we will not seek our own any more than Jesus did; we cannot possibly tell how much we have done to bring about that splendid thing for which many have been pleading.

---

These things shall be! A loftier race  
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise  
With flame of freedom in their souls,  
And light of science in their eyes.

They shall be gentle, brave and strong,  
To spill no drop of blood, but dare  
All that may plant man's lordship firm  
On earth and fire, and sea, and air.

Nation with nation, land with land,  
Unarmed shall live as comrades free;  
In every heart and brain shall throb  
The pulse of one fraternity.

—JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God.*

—Psalm 42: 11

## THE DUTY OF CHEERING UP

IT WILL be easier to see it as a real duty if we remember what life is like when it lacks the cheerful, hopeful outlook. Let a man get a fit of the blues, or a genuine dose of discouragement, and he is not only miserable and unhappy while it lasts, but his usefulness and efficiency are, for the time being, absolutely eclipsed. No matter how he may force himself to his tasks, or keep on going through the motions, a disheartened man is never doing good work, or measuring up to his possibilities to any degree at all. There is an old legend which says that the Evil One was at one time to be deprived of all his power to tempt man, but that he pleaded so hard to be left just one weapon of attack that he was handed discouragement, with the thought that it would not prove very effective alone. But it was discovered afterward that in it he had kept nearly all his power of deadly attack upon the human soul. The legend comes very closely home to human experience. So long as the star of hope burns brightly men can fight any opposition, or endure any hardship, but let a temptation to discouragement slide in by some back door of the soul, and how soon does courage falter and faith weaken and fine endeavor cease! And it usually is by some back door that discouragement comes, sliding in when no one is looking, and when there seems no reason for his coming. If we could keep him out how much better it would be! And I am sure that there must be some good way of doing that.

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Let not thy heart with sorrow faint;  
Supplant with hope thy fears;  
Look up and smile and God will paint  
A rainbow in thy tears.

—CARLOS P. DAY

*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

—Proverbs 4: 23

## AS WE MAKE IT

**I**F OUR life is narrow and mean and without inspiration we ought to remember that considerable of the blame therefor rests upon ourselves. We live in our thoughts and feelings and inspirations, and if these are broad and generous and wholesome nothing else need matter very much. And these certainly are very much what we make them, and we cannot place the responsibility for them off on circumstances or other people. We ourselves give tone and color to our lives; that is the fact that we cannot get away from. It is the spirit within that, shining through, makes life what it is for every one of us. And with the slow moulding and forming and inspiring of that spirit no one has the responsibility that we have. If we have trained it to kindness and generosity and patience and good cheer these excellent virtues will give comfort and strength and solace to our own living, and be a means of very much blessing and inspiration to other people; but if, on the other hand, we have allowed it to become crotchety and grasping and ill-tempered, no material blessing or favoring circumstance will prevent these soul vices from spoiling both our happiness and our influence. And when we complain that life has not been fair to us, and not given us the opportunity for breadth and comfort and happiness, what we really are complaining against is that we ourselves have not trained our souls for these things.

---

Our lives are songs—God writes the words—  
And we set them to music at pleasure,  
And the song grows glad, or sweet, or sad,  
As we choose to fashion the measure.

We must write the music, whatever the song,  
Whatever its rhyme or meter.  
And if it is sad, we can make it glad,  
Or if sweet, we can make it sweeter.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN



*And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while.*

—Mark 6: 31

## THE WAY TO A GOOD HOLIDAY

THERE is a multitude of tired folk all over the land who are just now rejoicing in the luxury of a few weeks' rest and change. It is really quite a fine art to be able to take that rest and change in the way that will best refresh and restore tired nature. Even with all the rules and regulations that are given us each one has, after all, to learn how for himself. A good deal depends upon what it is that has tired us when we are thinking of the best way of getting rested. One thing is certain, the man who isn't tired doesn't know anything about the luxury of rest. Among the many ways that Dame Nature has of holding an even hand among her children is this, that she never holds out the pure bliss of a rest to the man who doesn't know anything about the sweat and ache of working hard. So that we need hardly complain that the normal thing with us is work, work that tires, and wears us down, and sometimes gets a little monotonous, for it is that fact that opens the door to some of the most satisfying of our joys and pleasures. The way to a good holiday, therefore, must first of all be that way of hard, faithful, testing, tiring work. Then after that, common-sense and a seasonable opportunity makes everything possible. The man who is really tired scarcely needs to be told how to rest, does he?

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I said to my heart, "I am sick of four walls and a ceiling.

I have need of the sky.

I have business with the grass.

I will up and get me away where the hawk is wheeling,

Lone and high,

And the clouds go by.

I will get me away to the waters that glass

The clouds as they pass."

—RICHARD HOVEY



*But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams.*

—Isaiah 33: 21

## WHAT RELIGION DOES

ONE of the greatest benefits that religion brings to a man grows out of the fact that it, more than any other thing in his life, keeps him from turning in on himself and becoming narrow and selfish and self-centred. It is true that religious people are sometimes accused of being narrow and self-centred, and perhaps there may be something in the accusation at times, but in so far as there is point to the charge it is due to the fact that the religion of the people indicated is not of a genuine and good type, or is not functioning properly. Religion of the right sort in active operation links a man to God and opens up before him the great plans and purposes and programmes of the Eternal. Life cannot be mean or petty or commonplace to the man to whom God is a great reality, and the universe the expression of an all-loving Personality. To him everything in life is great and glorious and worthwhile. He always has something fresh and stimulating and uplifting to think about. And to him also there cannot come the ennui and staleness that the selfish feel. Ahead of him are always great programmes and possibilities, and the song he sings is of the better days that are coming. A great song to be able to sing, by the way! The singing of it has brought more joy and strength and courage to life than all other things put together.

---

These things shall be! A loftier race  
Than e'er the world has known shall rise,  
With flame of freedom in their souls,  
And light of science in their eyes.

These things—they are not dreams—shall be  
For happier men when we are gone;  
Those golden days for them shall dawn,  
Transcending aught we gaze upon.

—JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

*With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

—Ephesians 4: 2, 3

### DON'T GET IRRITATED

WE ARE sometimes tempted into thinking that this would be a very much better and happier world if other folks would only agree with us and see things as we do. But really the chances are that this tremendously radical change in affairs would be no improvement, even though we are so positive in our own minds that it would. This conflict of judgment and clash of opinions is not the bad thing that we sometimes take it to be. It is a way—yes, even a divine way—of progress. The radical who stirs up our inert conservatism may not be altogether agreeable to us, but we may need him just the same, and the man who opposes some of our pet plans and policies may be our good, though much disguised, friend. To agree to differ is sometimes much better than to agree. Conflicts of judgment will never cease, and we oughtn't to wish that they should, for it would be a very humdrum and cut-and-dried world if they did. But contempt of other folks' judgment ought to. And if we cherish such contempt it is no indication of how much we know, but rather of how ill-mannered and ungentlemanly and unchristian we are. If with all our differences we could walk together in love and fellowship, how splendid it would be. And when we cannot—well, it is a very bad sign indeed. But the probability is that we could if we tried hard enough and intelligently enough.

---

Ah me! Why may not love and life be one?  
 Why walk we thus alone, when by our side,  
 Love, like a visible God, might be our guide?  
 How would the marts grow noble! and the street,  
 Worn like a dungeon floor by weary feet,  
 Seem then a golden court-way of the sun.

—HENRY TIMROD

*I Paul have written it with my own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.*

—Philemon 19

## PAYING OUR DEBTS

**M**OST of us would be just a little offended if any one were to suggest that there was anything of the dead-beat about us, but this matter of paying our debts is, in reality, a bigger and more difficult task than we imagine sometimes, and it is just possible that we do not always do it as well and as carefully as we think we do. The man that we owe a few dollars to is not the biggest creditor we have. We can pay him, though that frequently is hard enough, but when that is done there are a whole host of debts still left upon our hands. There has been a great crowd of people, even before we ever came into this world, and certainly ever since, who have been doing a great many things for us and we haven't even begun to pay them back adequately yet. Whether we think of our home, the community, the Church, the nation, or that great thing we call civilization, which surrounds and enfolds us all, everywhere we see men and women toiling and sacrificing, and much of the fruit of it all drops into our lap unpaid for by us. It doesn't do to talk too glibly about paying our debts. If we succeed in doing it we will have to live a very busy, varied, and self-forgotten life in helping and doing—for a multitude of people. Indeed, as I have seen it, there is a great crowd of people who haven't even got started at the job of paying their debts, and they are people who mistakingly call themselves honest, too.

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Give the power to labor for mankind;  
 Make me the mouth of such as cannot speak;  
 Eyes let me be to groping men and blind;  
 A conscience to the base; and to the weak  
 Let me be hands and feet; and to the foolish, mind;  
 And lead still further on such as Thy Kingdom seek.

—THEODORE PARKER

*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

—Romans 12: 18

## LIVING PEACEABLY

WHEN Paul urged the Roman Christians to live peaceably with all men as far as it was possible, what did he mean by the admonition? What is involved in the effort to try to live peaceably with folk? Evidently something more than merely trying to get along without quarrelling and scrapping with them. Paul would never have been satisfied with a negative proposition of that sort, for he was a most thorough believer in positive virtues. As he looked at it, living peaceably with people was the very finest of fine arts, that a man came to only after patient effort and a schooling in unselfishness and Christian love. It involved the very active grace of considerateness for the rights and feelings of others, true kindliness and courtesy, one of the most beautiful flowers that the soil of the human heart can grow. It involved sympathy, the real kind that takes time and trouble to understand. It involved a whole group of virtues, that is, active and real virtues, that make their irresistible appeal to, and have their positive effect upon, those who come in contact with them. If a man is actively kind, and sympathetic, and neighborly, and considerate, he will not have a very great deal of difficulty in living peaceably with people. The trouble with many of us is that we have a thrawn, unneighborly, unfriendly feeling in our hearts, and it will show itself in all relationships with people. We ought to get rid of that.

---

Love's on the highroad,

Love's in the byroad—

Love's in the meadow, and love's in the mart!

And down every byway

Where I've taken my way

I've met Love a-smiling—for Love's in my heart.

—DANA BURNETT

*Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them. —1 Timothy 4: 15*

## THINK ON THESE THINGS

A CYNIC tells us that real thinking is a lost art in this our day, but we refuse to judge thus meanly of the race. And yet it is probably true that most of us do not give ourselves to solid, hard, conscientious thinking as we ought. The times call us to straight and serious thought, especially in regard to some very fundamental things. Many of us had got into the habit of taking life somewhat lightly and easily, not loading ourselves very heavily with its burdens or responsibilities or duties. We thought we could make money without too close question as to how, spend it about as we liked, and let the great burden of the world's care outside our own home rest on what shoulders it would. But the jarring of these times has rather loosened our sense of satisfaction in such philosophy of life. We are not now so sure that it is Christian, or even decently human, to live thus to ourselves and for ourselves. But dare we take this further step and think ourselves through the problem in which we are found, the problem of living in a world full of people and needs and tasks and difficulties, and doing it in the light of the teaching and spirit and life of Jesus Christ! But if we do not dare do that, then what kind of people are we? To be a coward toward life's problems and insistent questions is surely to be one of the worst kind of cowards. Surely to be alert and active and friendly toward all life's problems and interests is the only way to be a true Christian.

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Four things a man must learn to do  
If he would make his record true:  
To think without confusion clearly;  
To love his fellow-men sincerely;  
To act from honest motives purely;  
To trust in God and Heaven securely.

—HENRY VAN DYKE



*Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.*

—Philemon 21

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS

ONE of the strong and effective influences making for character and worthy living is that lurking thought that some one, somewhere, is expecting something worth while of us. There have not been many fine things done in the world's history that, if we knew everything, we could not trace much of the impulse that made them possible back to some fine expectation. It must be, therefore, one of the very best things we can do for any friend of ours to let him know by some subtle process that we are looking for him to do the clean, noble, heroic thing. That may be one of the very effective ways open to us of adding to the nobility and heroism of life in general. The man from whom we expect good things, and who has an inkling of our expectation, is not likely to fail us badly. And there are some of us who ought to be much better than we are when we remember that there are some people who are expecting that we will measure up to really fine and worth-while living. And this old world of ours ought to grow nobler and finer every day in order that some splendid people may not be disappointed in their expectations of it. It ought to be getting harder and harder every day for it to fail. And failing of the best things is such a cruel and wicked thing, just because it is disappointing to so many people—even to God Himself.

---

O World, be nobler, for her sake!

If she but knew thee what thou art,  
What wrongs are born, what deeds are done  
In thee, beneath thy daily sun,

Know'st thou not that her tender heart  
For pain and very shame would break?

O World, be nobler for her sake.

—LAURENCE BINYON



*That ye might be filled unto all the fulness of God.*

*—Ephesians 3: 19*

## THE RICHES OF LIFE

LIFE is a strange, topsy-turvy kind of thing; who may understand or explain it? We toil and struggle for the things that we think would give us happiness, and then find most of our real happiness and enjoyment in the incidental things for which we have not toiled or struggled at all. We keep on believing that the possession of certain things will give us the completest satisfaction, while all the time we see that the people who have the most of them are frequently the most dissatisfied, and we at the same time have actually got much of our satisfaction in learning to do without them. It seems so difficult to get possession of any considerable quantity of the things that are generally supposed to make men happy, without in the process losing something whose want makes real happiness quite impossible. If we get a little money, or a little social position, we often begin to feel sorry for the people who have not much of either, while all the time they are more rich and content and happy than we. It wasn't the money or the social position that spoiled things, but somehow when these came it was so hard to hold on to some of the things that really make life. Whenever I see a man who looks as if he seems sorry for me that I am poor I feel like shouting out to him with a great joy and gladness how many and rich and satisfying are the things I have, how I wish he appreciated and enjoyed them as I do.

---

Where weary folk toil, black with smoke,  
And hear but whistles scream,  
I went, all fresh from dawn and dew,  
To carry them a dream.

I went to bitter lanes and dark,  
Who once had known the sky,  
To carry them a dream—and found  
They had more dreams than I.

—MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

*Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem.*

—Isaiah 52:9

## THY VOICE AS A TRUMPET

6/7/28  
DO NOT be afraid to get a little enthusiastic about things once in a while! It will not hurt at all to say a few extravagant things occasionally. The fact of the matter is, there are still quite a few things left in this old world that you cannot at all adequately talk about save in somewhat extravagant terms. Did you ever notice how often Jesus said extravagant things? He talked about faith plucking up mountains; about a man saving his life by losing it; about it being much more blessed to give than to get! It surely cannot be out of the way for us to follow his example once in a while, and in our own way say such things as He said. Do not be afraid, either, of praising people occasionally, and of doing it with some abandon and whole-heartedness. It will not likely do them much harm; indeed they are much more likely to be spoiled for want of it! Call the world good! Say that the sky is very blue; that friendship is a beautiful and very wonderful thing; that a summer day must have been made by the very hand of God! Break out into song over the goodness and the joy of life; talk in unmeasured terms about the love of God and the kindness of man; shout some anthem of praise and do not care who hears you! It will do you no end of good.

I hear you, little bird,  
Shouting a-swing above the broken wall.  
Shout louder yet: no song can tell it all.  
Sing to my soul in the deep still wood:  
'Tis wonderful beyond the wildest word:  
I'd tell it, too, if I could.

Oft when the white, still dawn  
Lifted the skies and pushed the hills apart,  
I've felt it like a glory in my heart—  
(The world's mysterious stir)  
But had no throat like yours, my bird,  
Nor such a listener.

—EDWIN MARKHAM

*And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.*

—Revelation 21: 2

## THE HEAVENLY CITY

27/7/25

THAT great city, the New Jerusalem, never gets builded, does it? What wonderful pictures seers and prophets have painted of it. But sometimes it would seem as if the pictures are about all we have had of it up to date. Turning to the Old Testament we find the early prophets telling of a land flowing with milk and honey to which Israel was coming, but when they got there it seemed but a very poor and common-place land indeed. Later prophets drew a wonderful picture of the consummation of the nation's life, when a King should reign in splendor and with an everlasting and all-beneficent sway, but the same consummation when it came seemed a most disappointing anti-climax. And then came Jesus, and he told us of a Kingdom of Heaven that was to be built in the earth, and with its coming would come righteousness and love and brotherhood the whole world over. But two thousand years have gone and where is the Kingdom of Heaven, and where are the righteousness and love and brotherhood! What has been the matter? Well, in general just two things. First, the work of building heavenly Kingdoms and ideal cities is a very slow and uphill job. And another thing, our ideal and vision of what that Kingdom and city shall be grows and enlarges with the passing years. But the glory of the whole thing has been that, though we have builded so slowly, yet have we never stopped entirely nor has the vision quite forsaken us.

---

So we built ourselves a heaven,  
 Our God we set in heaven,  
 With prayer and praise we wrought them to our will:  
 But they could not fill the measure of our love  
 In the far land—O they were not great enough!  
 There is nothing, there is nothing great enough!  
 The far land is something greater still.

—JOHN HALL WHELOCK

*I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.*

—Psalm 119: 59

## THE SCHOOL OF LIFE

28/7/25  
THE School of experience is often a very trying school indeed, but it is well to remember that we have ourselves a good deal to do with making it so. If we learned easier; if we thought on our ways more earnestly and did not so persistently and stupidly shut our eyes to truth, and our souls to knowledge, we might escape some of the bitterness and hardship. We say that God will teach the world great lessons through the war, but He did not start the war just for that purpose; in fact He did not start it at all. But we, His creatures, having started the war, it seems likely that He, in His great mercy, will through it teach the world some great lessons that it obstinately refused to learn by other and easier ways. The rates in this school of experience are terribly high sometimes, but we have more to do with fixing them than God has, and in justice we ought to acknowledge that. We will learn a wiser way of life through the heart-break and agony and devastation of war, because we have refused to learn it in any easier school. But it is well to remember that life is always a school and that each new day has its lessons if only we will keep our eyes open to see them. If we have missed some in the past, all the more reason why we should be wise in the future. To be scholars and learners all the way through life—that is the ideal for us all.

---

They learn to live who learn to contemplate,  
For contemplation is the unconfined  
God who creates us. To the growing mind  
Freedom to think is fate,  
All that age and after-knowledge augurate  
Lies in a little dream of youth enshrined:  
That dream to nourish with the skilful rule  
Of love—is school.

—PERCY MACKAYE

*Was clad with zeal as a cloak.*

—Isaiah 59: 17

## SOME OLD SAWS

SOME old saws won't cut, and some cut the wrong way. They are warped and you can't follow the line with them. Some of the old proverbs that have come down to us have much wisdom in them, but some others, at least as we handle them, seem to have a twist of folly. We say, "What can't be cured must be endured." That is all right, no doubt, but when it helps us to settle down to the easy-going conviction that there are a whole lot of wrong things in this world that can never be made right, and that the philosophic thing is to accept them, then it is all wrong. There are some evils in the world of which we deliberately say that they have always been and we presume that they always will be, and then we think we have said the final word. What we ought to say is, that they have always been, but in the name of common sense and decency it is now high time that we should get rid of them. Who has any right to say that anything ill in this life of ours cannot be cured? We say it, not because we are philosophers, but because we are easy-going and lazy and don't like facing hard propositions and staying with them. There is hardly a man of us who doesn't need to kill out of his soul a whole brood of those easy-going, complacent, soft-shelled sentiments and convictions, and ask the good Lord to put into him some fire and courage and set of faith that will send him out to do a lot of the hard things that need doing so badly. A good many of us have been hunting around for easy things all our lives through.

---

Give me, O Lord, a soldier's rest,  
Who lives uneasy on the crest  
Of some bare shell-swept hill,  
And with the earth for pillow waits until  
The dawn of battle breaks.

—G. A. STUDDERT KENNEDY



*For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.*

—Hebrews 10: 36

9/8/25

## GRINNING AND BEARING

WE ARE reminded in the Scriptures that we have need of patience. Probably the majority of us, having to live in the kind of world that ours is, and with the kind of people who are in it, scarcely needed the reminder. And yet it may be that we did, for we have not given patience a very prominent place in our list of virtues. It ought to stand higher. It isn't exactly a popular virtue in our day. We like to see things go, and when they stick and hang back and refuse to eventuate we try to hustle them. Being patient with them is a last resort, and has to be forced on us. In fact we get very impatient with patient people sometimes. The people who can deliberately go ahead and do something else while they are waiting for the pot to boil try us sorely. We would like them to fret and fume and spill the water in their shoes like we do. To smile while we wait, to grin while we bear, hardly seems to be in us, and what patience we have is of a very negative order and comes of stern necessity. But we miss all the good of it in that way. We ought to make a real live virtue of our stern and dread necessity. The woman who told her husband, who was suffering from a jumping toothache, to "grin and bear it" may not have been tactful, but she gave good advice. And there are things even worse than toothache that are made bearable by resolute smiling.

---

I will reach far down in the pit of sorrow  
And gather song,  
With the bitter past I will deck to-morrow.  
I will turn no cowardly look behind me,  
But still fare on  
Till the flow of ultimate joy shall blind me.  
For I ask no blessing and no forgiving,  
The gain was mine,  
Since I learn from all things the truth of living.

—HELEN HUNTINGTON



*They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother,  
Be of good courage.*

—Isaiah 41: 6

## CRITICISM

9/8/25.

PROBABLY we need critics in this very imperfect world of ours, but we can easily have too many of them. The trouble with the critic is that he so easily goes to seed and becomes merely a fault-finder, and while the critic serves only a very limited purpose of good, the mere fault-finder serves absolutely none at all. He is, indeed, the one entirely useless and noxious person in the world, the sore trial of his home and family, the bane of his community, the eternal nuisance in the world. Criticism so easily develops a habit that if one feels compelled to indulge in it he should at once counteract the influence upon himself by trying to be specially appreciative of things in general. Any developing of the critical faculty can thus be balanced up, keeping the outlook on life sane and wholesome. And it is always to be remembered, when one feels that criticism is a positive duty, that the most effective kind of it is the criticism of a better deed or a purer motive or a higher ideal. These have a tendency to woo and win, while the criticism of the spoken word so often is harsh and repelling. There are not many people in the world that we will ever help to better things save as we show an attitude of kindness and sympathy and patience toward them, and criticism very rarely shows any of these virtues. And isn't it a fact that one of the last things some critics think of is of helping any one.

---

Teach me, Father, how to be  
Kind and patient as a tree.  
Joyfully the crickets croon  
Under the shady oak at noon;  
Beetle on his mission bent,  
Tarries on that cooling tent.  
Let me, also, cheer a spot,  
Hidden field or garden grot—  
Place where passing souls can rest  
On the way and be their best.

—EDWIN MARKHAM



## AUGUST

*She'll come at dusky first of day,  
White over yellow harvest's song.  
Upon her dewy rainbow way  
She shall be beautiful and strong.  
The lidless eye of noon shall spray  
Tan on her ankles in the hay,  
Shall kiss her brown the whole day long.*

—FRANCIS LEDWIDGE



*He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.*

—Proverbs 10: 5

## IN THE TIME OF HARVEST

9/8/28

THERE is pretty nearly one best time for doing everything. Even the seasons have a way of not waiting for slow, contemplative or lazy people. The man in this country who will not sow his grain until June need hardly expect to reap a bountiful crop just by pushing harvest time on a couple of months. October would make a much more exhilarating harvest month than August, but the man who tries to postpone his reaping until then will probably not have much to reap. And life in the large is very much like that. There are best times for doing many things, and the man who doesn't do them then usually has to be satisfied with a kind of second-best achievement. There have been men who have secured an education after they were twenty-five, but they usually found it to be an education with handicaps, better than none, but not so good as the best. Youth is the only best time for laying a foundation for such a superstructure. Of course if we have in this, or in any other matter, missed the best, we can hearten ourselves by remembering that there are very many splendid second-bests along the road of life. But we shall find that it is very much better to try and take life by the right end as we meet it than to have to spend so much time and energy trying to make up on lost and squandered opportunities. Surely it is a wise son who gathereth his harvest in the summer time.

---

Lose the day loitering, 'twill be the same story  
 To-morrow, and the next more dilatory,  
 For indecision brings its own delays,  
 And days are lost lamenting o'er lost days.  
 Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute!  
 What you can do, or think you can, begin it!  
 Only engage, and then the mind grows heated;  
 Begin it, and the work will be completed.

—GOETHE

*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

—2 Corinthians 4: 6

9/8/25

## KEEPING THE WINDOW OPEN

THERE has been a great increase in tuberculosis and other diseases throughout many sections of Central Europe, and the doctors have been laying not a little of the blame on the scarcity and high price of window glass. There were many broken windows and great numbers of them were plastered up with mud or too effectually closed in other ways, and the sunshine and air were shut out of homes with very disastrous effects upon the inmates. Of course the moral is, that we ought to let the sunshine into our homes all the time, and fresh air just as often as we can. That is a moral perhaps that most of us in this enlightened country think we do not need to have impressed upon us, and yet it may be that we do not fully realize how wide an application the moral has. A man's soul is a kind of house, and it is just as important that its windows should be open to the sunlight of heaven and to the fresh and invigorating breezes of right thinking, high ideals, and unselfish ambitions. To plaster up the windows of the soul with the mud of self-will and ignorance and unworthy self-seeking is to make good health and happy, wholesome living an impossibility. God has a cure for tuberculosis, either of the body or of the soul, if we will open the windows to take it in. And if we do not, who then can we blame!

---

Let there be many windows in your soul,  
That all the glory of the universe  
May beautify it. Not the narrow pane  
Of one poor creed can catch the radiant rays  
That shine from countless sources. Tear away  
The blinds of superstition: let the light  
Pour through fair windows, broad as truth itself  
And high as heaven.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN



*But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding.*

—Job 32: 8

## HAVE FAITH IN MAN

9/8/25

THIS is a time to have faith in God; but is it not also a time to have faith in man? If God is at the centre of the great movements of history in a day like this, may we not believe that He is also very near the hearts of a great multitude of men, inspiring, directing, and to some degree controlling lives that do not even acknowledge His presence? We say that God is good; may we not also say that man is good, good in this way, that he cannot escape the lure and fascination of that which is good? From this point of view is it not true that he seems to be incurably good? He does the wrong thing, sometimes the fierce, wild, wicked thing, but he cannot keep on doing it forever, and even while he is doing it he is haunted by the vision of the good and the right thing that, eventually, will check and shame him. The wild, fierce passion of Europe will cease, because man has an instinct for order and justice and kindness and goodfellowship, and cannot run amuck for ever. He will come back to gentler and more Christian ways, because he is a man and not a brute. Somehow I have faith to believe that God and man together, the Father and the child, will make something worth while of this old world yet, and that neither one will finally fail of his task. In fact, I have faith to believe that that combination assures the ultimate coming of the very best thing I can possibly picture or imagine.

---

The stars shine over the earth,  
The stars shine over the sea,  
The stars look up to God above,  
The stars look down on me,  
The stars may shine for a thousand years,  
A thousand years and a day,  
But God and I will live and love,  
When the stars have passed away.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*But desire earnestly the greater gifts.**—1 Corinthians 12: 31*

## IN CLASS ONE

9/8/25-  
**I**T TAKES all kinds of people to make a world, they say, but it is just as well to remember that there is a real danger that we become just a little overstocked with certain kinds. Now we can imagine that a grouch, a hard-visaged, sour-tempered individual, may serve some kind of useful purpose in this queer world of ours. Perhaps if it were not for him optimism would run away with some of the rest of us. But we can just make up our minds that there will be enough of him for all practical or useful purposes if we decide religiously to keep out of his group. The critic of life in general and everybody in particular may also have his place in this mundane sphere, but there is very great danger of there being more in his class than the occasion at all demands. It is a long time since the world needed more people to criticize and find fault with it, but all along it has been needing a larger list of those who forgot to be critical because they were so busy making things better. It is altogether likely there will be plenty of people in class three; you had better try for class one. And if you try hard enough and desire earnestly enough there is every probability that you will attain. At least it would be fine to go down struggling for the things that are best and highest. And not to try—well that is the most complete failure of all.

---

How falls it, Oriole, thou hast come to fly  
 In tropic splendor through our northern sky?

At some glad moment was it nature's choice  
 To dower a scrap of sunset with a voice?

Or did some orange tulip flaked with black,  
 In some forgotten garden, ages back

Yearning toward heaven until its wish was heard,  
 Desire unspeakably to be a bird?

—EDGAR FAWCETT

*I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.*

—Psalm 119: 75

## SEEING THE KINGDOM

9/8/28

THROUGH all the centuries of human history trouble has ever been a great revealer of truth and reality, a putter away of the empty and superficial, a pathway into the meaning and glory of life. Whether it suits our philosophy or not, it remains for ever a fact that men see things through their tears that they have never dreamed of before, things beautiful and good to live by. The garish day of prosperity and success often blinds us, just as does a look at the meridian sun of a summer's day. In the twilight we can see and understand far better. Many in our land to-day are sitting in the twilight, or even in the darkness of a great sorrow and loss. But surely God would make even that hour a time of revelation, if we will but let Him. He will show us the strength of duty, the beauty of service, the divineness of giving, the reality and infinite worth of the things of the spirit. And that revelation will redeem and glorify life, will give it a joy and a meaning that it never had when it was so crowded with the things that are seen and handled. Truly we ought not to fail to see the marvellous compensations that life brings. Often it takes away with one hand only to give back more lavishly and splendidly with the other. At least it is wisdom for any man to wait very patiently and see the conclusion of the whole matter before he lodges any complaint against Providence. That He is guilty of all the unjust and unreasonable things that are sometimes charged against Him is probably not true.

---

Were I not cold how should I come to know  
 One potent pleasure of the sun's sweet rays?  
 Or did I never breast the driving snow  
 What bliss were sweetest kernel of June days?

—WILSON MACDONALD

*In your patience ye shall win your souls.*

*Luke 21: 19*

9/8/25  
**MAKE HASTE SLOWLY**

**A**PPARENTLY the great Ruler and Disposer of the affairs of men is never in a hurry. His motto must surely be "Make haste slowly." If the scientists are right it took Him a few hundred millions of years to make this earth upon which we live. Off-hand we might say that He easily could have made it much more quickly, but as a matter of fact He didn't. It may possibly be that even worlds to be well made must be made slowly. If the evolutionist is right it took a few more uncounted millions of years to make men. And you could scarcely say that the job was done even yet. And to build up a just and ideal human society—how long have God and men been working at that task, and yet it would seem that a beginning had scarcely been made. Possibly we should be a little more patient about some things than we are. Possibly we should be just as anxious as we are about the direction in which we are moving, but not nearly so anxious about our rate of speed. We can afford to go slowly, in fact if we go wisely and safely we must go slowly it would seem. And if we see the goal to be reached as a great and splendid one our slow-moving steps ought not to vex and worry us so much. The direction toward which our face is turned is a matter of the most vital moment, but our rate of progress may not be so all important. And that philosophy is not traitor to anything that Jesus ever taught about the setting up of the Kingdom of God in the earth.

---

Deem not Love's building of the world undone—  
For Love's beginning was, her end is far;

By paths of fire and blood her feet must climb,  
Seeking a loveliness she scarcely knows,  
Whose meaning is beyond the reach of time.

—RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

*Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.*

—Exodus 23: 1

## TRY TALKING THEM UP

9/8/28

ARE you sure that there is any profit in your talking down your own day and age as much as you do, and calling attention to its frailties and failures after such persistent fashion? Even though you could prove that all that you say is true, you would be much harder put to it to prove that it was the whole truth, and certainly you would have greater difficulty still in showing that your continued saying of it was helping any. There seem to be a great many people at the present time engaged in telling the young folk of our day how frivolous and pleasure-seeking and altogether unsatisfactory they are. Facts are brought forward in great and damaging array to establish this argument. That it is any truer to-day than it was fifty years ago we do not believe, but we know that the man that is continually telling us that it is true is not helping the situation any, but rather is doing his best to make it so. One thing wrong in the present situation touching young people is that there are so many of their elders, who ought to know better, talking them down. If you are one try the opposite tack and see what happens—both to you and them. Now is a splendid time to use your gift of speech to fine purpose.

---

God wove a web of loveliness,  
Of clouds and stars and birds,  
But made not anything at all  
So beautiful as words.

They shine around our simple earth  
With golden shadowings,  
And every common thing they touch  
Is exquisite with wings.

There's nothing poor and nothing small  
But is made fair with them.  
They are the hands of living faith  
That touch the garment's hem.

—ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH



*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark. —Philippians 3: 13, 14*

## DOWN TO BRASS TACKS

I DON'T know why the expression, "Getting down to brass tacks" came to mean what it does, but it sounds good and pointed. Instead of wandering all over the lot and making tracks everywhere, a man ought to follow some kind of beaten and well-defined path. Whether he is talking politics, making a speech, preaching a sermon, or doing anything else that is worth doing, he ought to sense out what are the main issues and keep pretty closely to them. There are a great many side-issues and by-paths and *et ceteras* in life, and they seem to have a special attractiveness for some of us. They are not of no importance, but they are not of much importance, and the thing is to keep them in their place. I have known men who gave as much attention to their clothes as if they were really one of the great issues of life. Of course the question of how one's clothes hang is not of absolute indifference, but the question of what sort of thing it is that they hang on is of much more importance. There are just about two or three things in life that we ought to be absolutely sure that we are doing, the rest we can count as incidentals. And even if they are hard things what of that! They are infinitely worth doing.

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It is easy to mould the yielding clay.  
And many shapes grow into beauty  
Under the facile hand.  
But forms of clay are lightly broken;  
They will lie shattered and forgotten in a dingy corner.  
But under the slipping clay  
Is rock . . . .  
I would rather work in stubborn rock  
All the years of my life,  
And make one strong thing  
And set it in a high clean place,  
To recall the granite strength of my desire.

—JEAN STARR UNTERMAYER



*But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

—Romans 8: 25

## FIGHTING THE EAST WIND

SOME things are just about bound to go wrong. It will rain when we would like it to snow, or when we pray for the cool and grateful shower the big round sun shines forth pitilessly. People will bother us when we especially do not wish to be bothered, and the project that we most particularly desire to go right persistently persists in going wrong. We have to reckon on that. Then why not reckon on it, and accept the inevitable eventuation with a little bit of the philosopher's spirit. Most of us fret and fume and chafe about half our life away over the little things that go wrong, but that do not very much matter, only that they spoil some pet scheme or plan or thought that we have been cherishing. The wind has to blow from the east sometimes, even though an east wind is our special and peculiar aversion. To smile in the face of it will make it quit just as quickly as to scowl at it, and somehow it doesn't cut a smiling face so badly. When some things go wrong to-day the best and only thing to do is to let them go. It is the surest way to help them to go right to-morrow. And surely we are not children who find it impossible to wait until to-morrow comes! Indeed that waiting, if it be done in the right mood and temper, really helps to make life interesting and enjoyable. Waiting and smiling ought never to be hard things to do. And there are not many things we will do in life that we will find more helpful and worth while than they are.

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My Soul, sit thou a patient looker-on;  
Judge not the play before the play is done:  
Her plot hath many changes; every day  
Speaks a new scene, the last act crowns the play.

—FRANCIS QUARLES

*Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful. And judge not, and ye shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned.*

—Luke 6: 36, 37

## A LESSON IN CHARITY

6/9/25  
**I**T IS hardly safe for either you or me to undertake to divide the world up into classes, the good people and the bad people. If that has to be done, some one who knows more than either of us, whose vision is deeper and clearer, ought to try it. About two thousand years ago society in a certain place was very nicely parcelled out into two sections, all the pious people on the one side and the publicans and sinners on the other. But the ONE who ought to have known most about it did not think much of the classification. Indeed He said that it absolutely misrepresented the facts. Those in the second class actually listened to His appeal eagerly and pressed into the Kingdom, leaving the others outside. Somehow He gave them heart of goodness and that was just what they needed. It would have done no good to have told them how bad they were. They had had too much of that. It was the good thing that they might be that they needed to have held up before them. And it was that sight, and what they did with it, that judged them. He did not make the mistake that we often make of trying to scold men into goodness by calling them bad names. Even if we know the names fit there isn't any profit in it. And who are we indeed, that we should throw stones at other folks' sins. It were vastly more seemly that we get down on our knees confessing our own.

In men whom men condemn as ill  
I find so much of goodness still;  
In men whom men pronounce divine  
I find so much of sin and blot;  
I hesitate to draw the line  
Between the two, where God has not.

—JOAQUIN MILLER

*And let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*

—Hebrews 12: 1

## JUST KEEP GOING

6/9/25  
DON'T be beaten out too easily. The grace of persistence is a very excellent and overcoming and Christian one. If you do not think that adjective *Christian* should be in there, you had better read your New Testament over again. There are a multitude of men who are high and dry on the sand-banks of failure who would have succeeded splendidly if they had just kept going with enthusiasm and hopefulness. There are shoals of third and fourth rate people who ought to have been in the front rank, only they just dropped back, forgot their ideals, and accepted commonplace achievement and attainment. Obstacles will not keep men at the bottom of the hill, for what obstacle is there that the human will cannot master! But not climbing will, every time. The best things in life in any sphere do not come too easily, and therefore they do not come at all to the man who is too easily discouraged. "Ye did run well, who did hinder you?" How many people and things there are to check and hinder us if we will only let them! And if we let them we shall discover some day that the race is not won by the man who is good at a spurt, but by the one who stays at it till he gets his second wind, and then keeps going. The pity of it is that most of the failures in life are successes that needlessly stopped short of the goal.

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Wings for angels but feet for men!

We may borrow the wings to find the way—

We may hope, and resolve, and aspire, and pray;  
But our feet must rise or we fall again.

Heaven is not reached by a single bound;

But we build the ladder by which we rise  
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,  
And we mount to its summit, round by round.

—J. G. HOLLAND

*Set your mind on the things that are above.*

—Colossians 3: 2

### A FATAL FACILITY

8/9/25  
**A**MAN ought to be a little afraid of the things that he can do very easily. He may get to like them too much, give up his time to them, and leave greater and better things undone. They tell us that the gift of ready speech is one of the most dangerous gifts that one who would become a great speaker can possess. The danger is that he should trust over much in the mere gift, and become in the end an utterer of platitudes, than which there is nothing more tiresome under heaven. It ought to be a good deal of comfort to us to remember that the things that great men did that made them great have generally been the things that they learned to do at great cost and struggle. They may have had the genius, but genius is oftener than we think a flower blossoming only in well-cultivated soil. Of all modern men Robert Browning did most to teach the world that the striving after the *More*, even with sweat of brow and agony of soul, is better than the easy accomplishment of the *Less*. Life with no striving in it is the flattest and stalest thing that could be imagined, for in that striving itself lies much that gives zest, and stimulus, and inspiration. The joy of climbing to the things that are above—that is a joy indeed. And if we have missed that, nothing else we have kept or gained will ever make good the miss.

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What is the great æonian goal? The joy of going on.  
 And are there any souls so strong, such feet with swiftness shod  
 That they shall reach it, reach some bourne, the ultimate of God?  
 There is no bourne, no ultimate. The very farthest star  
 But rims a sea of other stars that stretches just as far.  
 There's no beginning and no end. As in the ages gone,  
 The greatest joy of joys shall be the joy of going on.

—SAM WALTER FOSS

*And it shall come to pass that, before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*

—Isaiah 65: 24

## ASKING GOD TO HELP

8/9/25

SOME of our old pagan notions about religion seem to persist in a truly remarkable way. For instance, any man whose thought of God was at all Christian would hardly feel that he needed to importune Him to interest Himself in this old world of ours, and in the difficult task of making it better, and yet, if you will notice, quite a little of our praying is of that sort. It is waste breath, surely. If He were not interested and committed in a way that we can know nothing about, what hope could there be in the situation? we may well ask. He requires no importuning, and there is never a danger that He will forget, or get indifferent. But there is a danger that we will. And the prayer that we ought to make every day is, that we might be kept intelligently interested, unhesitatingly and unreservedly devoted to the great concerns and purposes and ideals that never for one moment pass out of His thought and planning. No, God does not require ever to be urged to help, but how often do we need to pray the prayer that we might have the wisdom and far-sightedness to see what needs to be done, and the courage and loyalty and devotion to set about the doing of it! How much God will do if only we will let Him we will never know until we are ready to give Him His opportunity. That is about all He requires. And to give Him that is real praying.

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Shall we not open the human heart,  
Swing the doors till the hinges start;  
Stop our worrying, doubt and din,  
Hunting heaven and dodging sin?  
There is no need to search so wide,  
Open the door and stand aside—  
Let God in!


—CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN



*Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee?*  
 —Deuteronomy 32: 6

## BETTER RECONSIDER IT

9/9/28  
**A**ND so you have about decided, my friend, that you can do without God. You will excuse me for saying so, but I fear that it cannot be done. Something will happen the day after to-morrow to show you that I am right. Being a man,—which, whether you in your present mood will admit it or not, is practically the same as saying “being a Son of God”—there are cords that are binding you to Him that you will find it desperately hard to break. And after all why should you try to break them? Yes, why should you not take Him into your life, an honored Partner in all your affairs? You will need Him, for how many reasons I cannot tell you, but I know you will. And I wouldn't say that to frighten you, nor would I urge it for any merely sentimental or selfish reason. But you will make the most stupendous and finally fatal mistake if you try to get along without Him, or if you try to give Him any second or half-neglected place in your thoughts and plans and affections. You had better reconsider that decision, for no man living ever made a more foolish one. Indeed, you had better make the very opposite decision, and set in that empty life of yours the Being who alone can fill and satisfy it.



Deathless, though godheads be dying,  
 Surviving the creeds that expire;  
 Illogical, reason-defying,  
 Lives that passionate, primal desire;  
 Insistent, persistent, forever,  
 Man cries to the silences, “Never  
 Shall death reign the Lord of my soul,  
 Shall dust be the ultimate goal—  
 I will storm the black bastions of Might!  
 I will tread where my vision has trod;  
 I will set in the darkness, a light;  
 In the vastness, a God!”

—DON MARQUIS.



*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.*

—Matthew 7: 12

## THE GOLDEN RULE

9/9/28

SUPPOSE you and I try to live up to it! They say that it will not work in this pervert and devil-crossed world, but I fancy the statement has never yet been quite proved. We can hardly get away from the conviction that the One who gave it to us intended that it should be put into actual practice. And He, we must admit, saw deeply and clearly into life, and knew what could and ought to be. He did not ask men and women to do empty-headed, impossible things, for he lived in a real world, and day by day kept in closest and most sympathetic touch with people. If He intended it to be a rule of life, then we ought to make a very genuine effort at accepting and realizing it. It is scarcely an excuse to say, as some do, that the rule will work when everyone accepts it, and to protest readiness to fall into line when all the world is ready. That would never get us anywhere, of course, and would only be a shallow mocking of the command given. No, as honest followers of our Master, we ought to try out this great rule and counsel that He gave us. Coming right down to it, can we say that we ever made any big, persistent effort to live out the Golden Rule? And until we do, ought we to affirm so very positively that it will not work? Perhaps it really will work when we are ready to make it. But are we ready now?

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Shall I wrench from my finger the ring  
 To cast to the tramp at my door?  
 Shall I tear off each luminous thing  
 To drop in the palm of the poor?  
 What shall I do to be great?  
 Teach me, O Ye in the light,  
 Whom the poor and the rich alike trust:  
 My heart is aflame to be right.

—HAMLIN GARLAND

*And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall show thee.*

—Ezekiel 40: 4

## THE SHUT SOUL

9/9/25 IF THERE is one thing that a kindly God wishes to do for men more than another it is to keep their thoughts and hopes from turning in on themselves, and their lives from becoming self-centred and unresponsive. One of the reasons why the world is made so beautiful and so crowded with variety must be that men, seeing it, will be drawn out of themselves, and for a time forget personal affairs in the charm and interest of the things about them. And for most of us life is so ordered that there is a multitude of things and people appealing to us and making demands of us, so that it is very difficult for us to forget, or to sit down unmolested in any little narrow world of our own creating. And yet with it all some of us do manage to live a very circumscribed and contracted existence, and to shut our souls against many of the appeals and voices that would save us from our own selfish selves. And in doing so, how much we miss of what was intended for us, and how joyless and drab we make our lives, words cannot tell. Undoubtedly God did intend that life should be full of zest and interest for every one of us, and should know all the joy of bigness and beauty and far-vision, but we thwart and make impossible all His planning when we shut the windows of our souls against His world that is so interesting and beautiful and compelling.

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Thine is the loveliness of every rose,  
 And thine the velvet on the white moth's wings;  
 Thine is the scented foam the sea wind blows,  
 And thine the April song the robin sings.

Scarcely we heed the beauty Thou hast made—  
 Beauty of stars that set the night with gold;  
 Beauty intangible of sun and shade—  
 These are the wonder gifts we lightly hold.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*Be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man.*

—1 Kings 2: 2

## GROWING A STURDY SOUL

9/9/28-

LIFE puts it up to us a good many times, does it not? It challenges us a dozen times a day, making difficult demands upon us, and asking us to do things that are neither alluring nor comfortable. Of course if we are so inclined we can run around the challenge or shut our eyes to it, or we can even so educate ourselves that we will be largely insensible to it, but not many of us, surely, are so cowardly and spiritless as that. It is a fine thing to face up to life, to respond to the difficulties that it puts in front of us, to match ourselves against its call to do testing and hard and worth-while things. It is fine, for one thing, because there is no other way of growing a sturdy, virile soul. A man who runs away from things is a coward, and a coward is about the most miserable and unattractive thing on the face of the earth. And then facing up to life, and taking its difficulties and obligations somewhat seriously, is the only way of making life count. Making a success of life in any real way is never child's play. It is never done by accident or trifling; courage and hard work and persistence are part of the price that always has to be paid. And then the valorous, responsive, courageous spirit is fine because it does seem to be a divinely intended way of life. It is in the scheme of things that real men living a real life should not find things too easy. Every day the Master of Life is calling us to show the metal that is in us.

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I'd have the driving rain upon my face,—  
Not pelting its blunt arrows at my back,  
Goaded with blame along its ruthless track,  
But flinging me defiance in the race.

And I would go at such an eager gait  
That whatsoever may fall from heaven of woe,  
Shall not pursue me as some coward foe,  
But challenge me—that I may meet my fate.

—JOHN FINLEY

*Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved.*

—Jeremiah 17: 14

## HEALING THE NATIONS

9/9/28  
IT IS wonderful the power of recovery that is inherent in nature. Our wounds will heal, and our aches and pains and ailments will leave us if we give them only half a chance. Doctors and medicines never cure any one; they only give nature just a little help; she herself is the great restorer. Even outside the realm of the physical we see the same tendency to restoration. Time lays its kindly hand upon our griefs and sorrows and troubles, and somehow the sharp edge of them is taken off, and we can bear them; sometimes even we can forget all about them. Let us thank God for this. It is a sign that it is God's world and that somehow kindness and sympathy and goodness are at the heart of things. Sometimes it scarcely seems so. Looking too closely at the pain and the grief and the sorrow they seem to be about all that there is. We so easily forget the great healing processes that are at work, turning sickness into health, and making even sorrow to become a great and abiding peace. These great facts ought to develop in us the habit of looking forward hopefully to the better things that are to be. Everywhere pain tends to yield to comfort; dark days will turn to bright ones almost before we know it. To-morrow is always coming, and no one ever knows how much of blessing it may bring.

The night is very black and grim,  
Our hearts are sick with sorrow,—  
But, on the rim of the curtain dim,  
A pulsing beam, a tiny gleam,  
Whispers of God's To-morrow.

Beyond the night there shines a light,  
Our eyes are dim with sorrow,—  
But Faith still clings, and Hope still springs,  
And Love still sings of happier things,  
For life is flighting strong new wings  
In search of God's To-morrow.

—JOHN OXENHAM

*Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*

—1 Samuel 7: 12

## EBENEZER

9/9/28

WHEN Samuel, the Prophet-Judge of the ancient Hebrews, had brought about a great victory and deliverance for his people as against their inveterate foes, the Philistines, we do not find that he put it down in the records just that way. Other rulers and great ones had been specially fond of setting up monuments to their own achievements; but Samuel took a stone and planted it and calling it Ebenezer, "stone of help," he said, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." That is a fine, and the only sound and safe philosophy of life. Throughout all the good and worthy deeds that any of us is doing there runs the golden thread of the divine grace and help and uplift. Without that they would never be done. We ought not to forget that fact, but keep gratefully setting up our stones of help all along life's way, "The Lord helped us." And surely we can go on from that and say. "The Lord will help us for all future days and needs." And thus our Ebenezers will make life strong and faithful and enduring. And it must be that that sanctifying of life will make it seem so much more dignified and worthwhile and full of meaning.

---

If there be good in that I wrought  
 Thy hand compelled it, Master, Thine;  
 Where I have failed to meet Thy thought  
 I know, through Thee, the blame is mine.

The depth and dream of my desire,  
 The bitter paths wherein I stray,  
 Thou knowest, Who hast made the fire;  
 Thou knowest, Who hast made the clay.

One stone the more swings into place  
 In that great Temple of Thy worth.  
 It is enough that through Thy grace  
 I saw naught common on Thy earth.

—RUDYARD KIPLING



*But thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

—*Leviticus 19: 18*

## ON LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR

7/9/25  
WHEN we are admonished to love our neighbor as ourselves the command at once suggests the wisdom and necessity of looking into the question of how, after all, we really do love ourselves. In putting His admonition in that form the Master evidently intended to put us at once right up against that question. Clearly, if our love for ourselves is not a fine, strong, clean, noble thing, we cannot even understand what it is that Jesus is talking about, much less measure up to the thing which He asks us to do. If I do not think well of myself, if I do not cherish in my own soul the sentiments and ideals that will allow me to think well of myself, there will not be much chance that I will have that esteem and respect for my fellowman without which anything like real love toward him would be impossible. I cannot love my neighbor except as a noble, unselfish affection is an instinct of my own soul. Evidently Jesus intended to teach us that the task of loving our neighbor, difficult as it is, has to be preceded by the harder task of growing a soul that would make it possible. And then loving our neighbor is just the natural overflow of the Christ-love that is native to us. If we are as we ought to be, Jesus' demand will not make any real impossibilities for us. It is only when we haven't His spirit that the thing is impossible.

---

God did anoint thee with His odorous oil,  
To wrestle, not to reign; and He assigns  
All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,  
For younger fellow-workers of the soil  
To wear for amulets. So others shall  
Take patience, labour, to their heart and hand  
From thy hand, and thy heart, and thy brave cheer,  
And God's grace fructify through thee to all.  
The least flower, with a brimming cup, may stand  
And share its dewdrop with another near.

—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING



*Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.*

—Luke 6: 38

## ESSAYS IN APPRECIATION

9/9/25

TRY to be a bit appreciative of things; it is a habit that will commend itself when you come to think the matter over. An abnormal development of the critical faculty is a most uncomfortable ailment, both for the one who suffers from it himself and for the many who suffer from him. It may be his wife who tries to cook his meals, his tailor who tries to make his clothes, or his preacher who tries to lead his pestiferous soul into the ways of righteousness, but the man who has the habit will find something to complain about from early morn till dewy eve, January to December, and the people who live with him and about him will find him a kill-joy, a perversion, a pest. It is not that he has anything especially to complain of, for generally life gives him more than he deserves, as he probably would admit himself, if faced with it. He has built up the habit with the years until it has become almost an instinct from which it is very hard to escape. And bound and blinded as he is, he misses that great truth that even a blind man ought to see, that an appreciative spirit freshens the whole atmosphere in which a man lives and turns all the dross of life into gold. Yes, essays in appreciation are the finest experiments a man can make.

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Give love, and love to your heart will flow,  
A strength in your utmost need;  
Have faith, and a score of hearts will show  
Their faith in your word and deed.

For life is the mirror of king and slave,  
'Tis just what you are and do;  
Then give to the world the best you have,  
And the best will come back to you.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN



*Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.* —Deuteronomy 6: 12

### LEST WE FORGET

"**T**HEN beware lest thou forget." How often the refrain of that warning sounds in the message that prophets and teachers gave to Israel in the days long gone by. There seemed to be so many things that had a tendency to slip out of their memory, great events in their history, great truths that had been learned at the cost of struggle and pain and sacrifice, great lessons growing out of the dealings of Jehovah with their race. They seemed to have an incurably besetting sin whose very seat and throne was in their memory, and if they could only be cured of their forgetfulness, the prophets felt, they would be saved from the greater part of their sin and suffering. It wasn't that they didn't know, but that they failed to keep what they knew fresh in their memory, and relate it to the life they were living. And their forgetting cost them dearly and brought tragedy and disappointment into their history many, many times over. But is not Israel's history a parable, and is there any word we need to heed to-day more than this one, "then beware lest thou forget?" We know, we understand, but my, how poor our memory is! And what tragedies happen in life when men forget and grow careless and indifferent to great issues! And it is these great issues that we seem most inclined to forget about.

---

Bring me my bow of burning gold!  
 Bring me my arrows of desire!  
 Bring me my spear! O clouds unfold!  
 Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight  
 Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
 Till we have built Jerusalem  
 In England's green and pleasant land.

—WILLIAM BLAKE

*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.*

—Romans 12: 10

## AGREEING TO DIFFER

9/9/25-

TO BE able to disagree vigorously and aggressively with a man and yet live on real terms of friendship with him ought to be a possibility with nearly any one of us. But probably some of us have found it extremely difficult to make it a reality. And now that I come to think of it, some very good people have before now found such an achievement utterly beyond them. History does not record any more bitter fights than those that the theologians have waged among themselves, and sometimes it was over matters that we really have difficulty in seeing where the issue lay at all. And if you want anything real hot and nasty, you'll find even a modern church quarrel quite to your liking. Even good men and women sometimes cannot let others differ from them and keep sweet about it. A famous Canadian politician, recently deceased, did not speak to an opponent, whom he met nearly every day, for twenty years. Now that both he and his opponent have crossed over into the other life, I wonder what he thinks of that performance! It is very pitiable and very silly, and if we are guilty we ought to feel ashamed of it. Surely we ought to be able to credit the other fellow with sincerity and honest convictions. And if we can do that we ought to be able to live on terms with him. I wonder if that thought of the after-life and the reconciliations and understandings that must come there would not make it a little easier.

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Whether the time be slow or fast,  
Enemies, hand in hand,  
Must come together at the last  
And understand.

No matter how the die is cast  
Nor who may seem to win,  
You know that you must love at last—  
Why not begin?

—WITTER BYNNER

*For we are God's fellow-workers.*

—1 Corinthians 3: 9

## THE DIVINE DISCONTENT

9/9/25  
AFTER all this is a fairly good world, is it not? I have little patience with, and no particular use for, those people who are everlastingly complaining against and finding fault with it. If we will try to see the good side of it, and to make the best of every situation as it presents itself to us, we ought to be able to see at least a little more of brightness than of gloom in life about us, a little more of goodness than of evil, and be able in our own souls to do a little more of singing than of sighing. But this isn't a perfect world, we must remember. There are a great many things in it that are not as they ought to be, a whole host of things that ought to be made better. We ought to get that fact fixed very firmly in our minds. And the work of making them better is not any easy-going job either; it is a strenuous and formidable task. So that it comes around to about this, that while we should go through life seeing and enjoying what it has to offer of good and of happiness, we ought not to shut our eyes altogether to the other side of the picture. About the most tiresome man in all the world is the man who light-heartedly declares and insists that this is a real good world and then lets it go at that. But the real men everywhere, while they see and enjoy the good, accept the task that is given them of helping God to make it better.

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Come, then, let us cast off fooling, and put by ease and rest,  
For the cause alone is worthy till the good days bring the best.

Come, join the only battle wherein no man can fail,  
Where whoso fadeth and dieth, yet his deed shall still prevail.

Ah! come, cast off all fooling, for this, at least, we know:  
That the Dawn and the Day is coming, and forth the Banners go.

—WILLIAM MORRIS

*How often would I . . . and ye would not!*

—Matthew 23: 37

## THE FAILURE OF SUCCESS

9/9/25

THERE have been a good many bad failures in life that have grown out of what has looked like too much success. Of course there is no virtue in not succeeding, and it would be a rather senseless proceeding for a man to stop short of success in any enterprise just because he was afraid he could not stand it. But, as a matter of fact, whatever they might be able to do, a good many men do not stand success very well. It is no pessimistic or kill-joy philosophy that makes me say that, but just an ordinary observance of life. And it is not because this old world is all made wrong that so good a thing as success often turns out badly. The fault is just here, a good many men, when they are succeeding splendidly, forget or neglect some things that are very important. I knew a man who, as a poor man, seemed to have a wholesome amount of genuine and very helpful religion, but when he began to get rich he began to lose it. By the time he had a hundred thousand dollars you would not have thought that he had ever had any religion at all. The fault did not seem to lie with the method of making the money, or with the money itself. It lay with the man, who let the money make a fool of him. Success often does that. It doesn't do it of necessity, but it does it because we let it. And because it is so, we have no right to inveigh against life or Providence or our fellow man. It is all our own doings.

God dowers the world with the wealth of stars,  
As only His bounty can.  
He opens the locks and breaks the bars,  
And leaves it free to man.

Man comes, and picks up some trifling toy,  
The work of a schoolboy's knife;  
Then says, when it brings him little joy,  
How poor a thing is Life.

—CLARIBEL WEEKS AVERY



*And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.*

—Isaiah 58: 12

## HELPING TO BUILD UP

9/9/25  
**E**XAGGERATED dissatisfaction, unchecked impatience, reckless and untempered fault-finding and criticism, make an ugly brood of follies at any time, but in a day like the present they are monstrous in their possibilities of evil and disaster. If the attitude of mind and soul which they indicate would get us anywhere, much could be overlooked, but it is the futility of their inspiration that most of all condemns them. We need, above all things, the poise and clear vision and directness that are possible only when men are masters of themselves and see life whole and wholesome and in all its relations. Not to have an eye for the good that is in the world, and in the present organization of society; not to have some little sane patience with the evils and shortcomings and inequalities of our civilization that root themselves in a long history, and that cannot be eradicated all at once; not to cherish a constructive, helpful attitude toward life in general, is to be no true friend of progress and the stable common good. If we are to help to build up a noble life in the earth we must learn to forget much of the past, to be patient with much of the present, and to be hopeful and courageous and trustful about the future. Belittling and despising what is, never helped to make anything better.

---

Would'st shape a noble life? Then cast  
No backward glance toward the past;  
And though somewhat were lost and gone,  
Yet do thou act as one new-born.  
What each day needs, that shalt thou ask;  
Each day will set the proper task.  
Give others' work just share of praise,  
Not of thine own the merits raise;  
Beware no fellow-man thou hate,  
And so in God's hand leave thy fate.

—GOETHE



*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, . . . think on these things.*

—*Philippians 4: 8*

## MAKING OUR OWN AFFLICTIONS

10/9/25

IT IS the scientist who is telling us these days with no uncertain emphasis that a great many of the aches and pains and bodily ills from which humanity is suffering have a mental and not a physical basis. A man may nurse a pain in his abdomen, or in his head, so sedulously that the very attention he gives it increases it many fold, so that a very slight disturbance of only one sensory nerve spreads itself over the entire consciousness, producing a very real suffering and anguish which, though physical, has a purely mental origin. Even in the much-talked-of case of the French-woman who recently persuaded her husband to take her life to relieve her of her suffering, it has been found that her ailment, which apparently gave her exquisite torture, had no physical basis whatever. She was what the physicians call a major neurotic. And it is the scientific man who is telling us that these ailments that have their root in the imagination are the worst of all possible ailments. It is worse to have nothing the matter with you and think you have than really to have something the matter with you. Which shows what absurdities our human folly and ignorance will lead us into sometimes. And which shows us, too, what a fine thing it is to have control of our imagination, and to keep it sane and wholesome.

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O Lady! We receive but what we give  
 And in our life alone does nature live:  
 Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!  
 And would we ought behold of higher worth,  
 Than that inanimate, cold world allowed  
 To the poor, loveless ever-anxious crowd?  
 Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth  
 A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud  
 Enveloping the earth—  
 And from the soul itself must there be sent  
 A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,  
 Of all sweet sounds the life and element.

—SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

*Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.* —Psalm 37: 5

## HE SHALL BRING IT TO PASS

12/9/25  
**I**S THE old Psalmist's idea, that it is safe and wise to trust a great many of all sorts of things that might give us anxiety and worry, in the hands, and to the fatherly care, of an over-ruling Providence, a sane and reasonable idea for this scientific day of ours? Perhaps we ought to seek our answer to such a question in the method and message of Jesus Christ. Somehow we are compelled to believe that He couldn't have been mistaken about a matter so vital as this. And do we not find that the Psalmist's idea, made still more personal, and real, and implicit, underlies the whole life and teaching of Jesus? He counsels against care and worry; He insists that God knows and is interested in all the details of our human life; He Himself implicitly believed that His Father's wisdom and grace were available for every detail of His life and work, and often and often He reminded His disciples that His privilege was theirs also. That idea of a Providence that cares for men was one of the big ideas of His life. Surely in view of that we need not hesitate to accept it. It may, at times, seem hard to accept; there may indeed be strong arguments against it, but that one argument of the thought and attitude of Jesus surely weighs all others down. We are simply compelled to believe that in a matter so near the heart of His faith as this He was right without question.

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God smiles as He has always smiled;  
 Ere suns and moons could wax and wane,  
 Ere stars were thundergilt, or piled  
 The Heavens, God thought on me, His child;  
 Ordained a life for me, arrayed  
 Its circumstances, every one,  
 To the minutest; ay, God said  
 This head, this hand, should rest upon  
 Thus, ere He fashioned star or sun.

—ROBERT BROWNING

*And he said unto him, Well done, thou good servant: because thou wast found faithful in a very little* . . . . .  
—Luke 19: 17

## MY BUSY DAY

10/9/25

I OFTEN wonder what we do with all the time which is saved to us by the many labor-saving and time-saving inventions and expedients of our day. There is a multitude of them, and the aggregate gained must be a very considerable one. Yet we are just as busy as our fathers were, and it even looks on the outside as if we were a great deal busier. We haven't time to go into politics, or get interested in the affairs of the community; we haven't time to do anything in connection with the Church; why, we even haven't time to play with the children when we come home at night. We are really tremendously busy. But do we get much more real work done than our grandfathers did? I am not really sure that we do. We do make a great fuss and fluster over it; we are in a wonderful pother and excitement about it most of the time; but the net results are what tell, and when we come to sift down to them they are not so tremendous after all. I am afraid that often we are feverishly busy doing very little, and that the things that take up much of our time and energy are scarcely worth it. Less hurry over bigger tasks might be better. A more quiet, conscientious, faithful doing of the little, commonplace, every-day tasks might be a really greater and more enduring achievement.

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Here in our daily lives—oh, truth profound—  
Here is our battle ground;  
Unseen, ignoble, squalid is this strife,  
But if we win, it makes more sure all life,  
And every time we fail, through you, or me,  
Evil has won another victory.  
Oh, not afar,  
Beneath some alien star,  
But here, our field of honor waits us. Then  
See that we bear ourselves like good fighting men.

—MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

*Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*  
*Psalm 119: 18*

## THE GIFT OF SIGHT

10/9/25

ONE prayer almost above all others every man should make every hour of his waking life; that is, that God might give him eyes to see. There are so many things one ought to see. The world is full of meaning; life is crowded with lessons; the signs of things divine and wonderful are all about us, and yet it must be admitted that many of them might as well not be, so far as some of us are concerned. There is so much of beauty in the world that remains a sealed book to many! Birds, flowers, sunsets, mountains, green fields, the stars at night—some people never see them at all. I often think that the great Creator must have a feeling of sore disappointment, that having made the world so beautiful there are so few eyes that see it, and so few souls that really understand. And how many of us, too, there are who do not at all see the goodness that there is in the world! What tragic stories we tell of its sin and crime and falseness and injustice! They are all true, no doubt, but there are other stories that are quite as true that we miss telling altogether, stories of its love and unselfishness and patience and infinite long-suffering—stories that are fuller of meaning than the others ever possibly could be. We ought to ask God to help us to see these.

---

One asked a sign from God; and day by day  
 The sun arose in pearl, in scarlet set;  
 Each night the stars appeared in bright array,  
 Each morn the thirsting grass with dew was wet.  
 The corn failed not in harvest, nor the vine,  
 And yet he saw no sign.

One prayed a sight of heaven; and ere-while  
 He saw a workman at his noontime rest.  
 He saw one dare for honor, and the smile  
 Of one who held a babe upon her breast;  
 At dusk two lovers walking hand in hand;  
 But did not understand.

—VICTOR STARBUCK

*For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* —Galatians 6: 7

## PAYING THE PIPER

10/9/25

"THEY who dance must pay the piper," the old saw says. But why should the miserable piper insist on his money every time? It was poor enough playing, and very little real enjoyment in the dancing, now that we look back at it, and we can just hardly see why there should be such a clear and emphatic and persistent insistence on the bill being paid. Why shouldn't a man be able to play fast and loose with things and not have to face the reckoning in the end? Multitudes and multitudes of men have, in one way and another, late or early, made the discovery that it cannot be done; but why cannot it be done? Why is it that, having sown the seed, the man must, ripening late or ripening early, take up his sickle and reap his harvest? Some of us think that if we were running this universe we would have things different just at this point. But are we wise? Is it not true that even God Himself cannot play fast and loose with law? And is it not true that even this law of the sowing and reaping holds good when the harvest is one of joy and blessing, as well as when it is one of sorrow and of cursing? And does not this fact open up the way to a multitude of most beneficent compensations? And is it not true, also, that the thought of the piper and his bill has stopped many a man from joining in the dance? Not a high motive, you say? Well, life has some strange ways of teaching its lessons.

---

At the devil's booth are all things sold;  
 Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold.  
 For a cap and bells our lives we pay,  
 Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking;  
 'Tis heaven alone that is given away,  
 'Tis only God may be had for the asking;  
 No price is set on the lavish summer;  
 June may be had for the poorest comer.

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL





## SEPTEMBER

*Lo! a ripe sheaf of many golden days  
Gleaned by the year in Autumn's harvest ways,  
With here and there, blood-tinted as an ember,  
Some crimson poppy of a late delight,  
Atoning in its splendor for the flight  
Of summer blooms and joys—  
This is September.*

—L. M. MONTGOMERY



*And having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*

—Matthew 13: 46

## RATING IT HIGH

JESUS said that the Kingdom of Heaven was like a pearl of such great price that a man was fully justified in selling all that he had in order that he might buy it. Whether or not we can fully understand all that is implied in His use of that figure, at least it gives us a most impressive sense of the value of that of which he speaks. Here is a thing, He says, that is worth everything else which life has. Having this, a man can afford to be largely indifferent about everything else. It is a tremendous claim to make, but evidently He meant it, if ever He meant anything. Do we agree with Him? Perhaps we are just a little ashamed to say, lest those who look at our lives would answer that they had not seen many signs that we did. Surely we ought to agree with Him, and our lives ought to witness our faith. We know fairly well what Jesus means by His phrase, "Kingdom of Heaven," and we needn't make any difficulties for ourselves over that. Is it to us the great, big, vital, all-important thing that claims our thought and interest and activity as nothing else does? If it isn't, well then it must be that we are giving to lesser and smaller and meaner things what they have no right to claim. At any rate we ought to face right up to the question that His great estimate throws at us. The matter would seem to be one that ought to have the most earnest and honest consideration

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The gods are round us night and day,  
 And in their hands they carry gold—  
 Silver and gold they offer us,  
 Free harvest ere our hearts grow cold.  
 Gold and silver the gods display  
 And yet, behind our backyard fence,  
 We in our grimy corner sit,  
 And play at pitch and toss for pence.

—VERA WHEATLEY

*Come ye, and join yourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant  
that shall not be forgotten.*

—Jeremiah 50: 5

## I REALLY FORGOT

14/9/25  
**I**T IS all right to excuse our children once in a while when they tell us they forgot, but it is a question to what extent we should be lenient with ourselves in the same connection. If we hadn't forgotten it would have been a good deal better for us and a good deal better for other people as well, and therefore a too light forgiving of it doesn't seem just. And of course this doesn't apply alone to those individual cases when we forgot to do the little errand that our wife requested, or to keep the appointment we had made; it applies as well to that sometimes long list of good things that probably we would have done if we had only thought of them in time, but that we did not think of and therefore left undone. There is, I fear, a great field of potential kindness and goodness in the world that many of us have a notion we would like to enter but that we never really get into at all. Most of us are not bad-hearted; we wish people well, and would like to do them a good turn, but we never seem to see the chance or get into the habit of looking for the opportunity. Our good-will never gets anything positive about it. But really it is time that it did. Perhaps we may get some credit for the fine things we forgot or neglected to do, but will any one else ever get any good out of them?

---

What is the sorriest thing that enters Hell?  
None of the sins,—but this and that fair deed  
Which a soul's sin at length could supersede.  
These yet are virgins, whom death's timely knell  
Might once have sainted; whom the fiends compel  
Together now, in snake-bound shuddering sheaves  
Of anguish, while the pit's pollution leaves  
Their refuse maidenhood abominable.  
Night sucks them down, the tribute of the pit,  
Whose names, half entered in the book of Life,  
Were God's desire at noon.

—DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

*That I may make the voice of thanksgiving to be heard.* —Psalm 26: 7

## THANK YOU

14/9/25

IT IS not a difficult thing to say with the lips, but saying it right down in the heart is another matter. Really appreciating what people do for us, and telling them about it once in a while, is not a common habit with as many of us as it might be. As a rule, no persons do as much for us as our own folks do, and few get as little thanks and expressed appreciation for it. We men think our mothers ought to be good to us surely; so should our sisters, and our wives, and our children; and their kindness, and care, and self-sacrificing attention are taken for granted. But no service ought to be taken for granted in that way that we fail to appreciate the goodness and love that prompt it. Appreciation is the best, and in many cases the only, return we can give for the sympathy and help that come to us from those who are near to us, and that give to life its true joy and satisfaction. And appreciation is easy to show if we really feel it. And usually it is easy enough to feel it if we only take time to think about what other people are doing for us. Ingratitude is all the greater fault because it is largely a result of self-centred thoughtlessness. If we are guilty of it, there doesn't seem to be any way to find an excuse. And saying "thank you" from the heart does cheer life so, and does add such a charm and beauty to the every day of things.

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Ever green is the balsam tree,  
 Stealing away the heart of me  
 With nods and bows to all who pass,  
 Spreading shadows upon the grass,  
 Scattering fragrance far and near,  
 Seeming to call: "Come rest you here,  
 While you learn this lesson to-day,—  
 Do your best in a charming way."

—ANNIE A. PRESTON

*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

—Isaiah 5: 20

## A GOOD HATER

14/9/25  
THERE are in general two chief reasons why we are opposed to certain plans and schemes and policies and programmes for life. One is the altogether worthy one that we believe them to be wrong and mistaken, and not wholly likely to work out right. They are bad and therefore we fight them. But sometimes—though we do not openly admit it—we fight things, not because we think them bad, but because some dim conscience tells us they are good, and we are not prepared to accept the verdict and live up to it. In fact there is nothing that we fight so venomously and persistently as the good, or the particular form of good that we see but don't like because in some way and for some reason it rebukes us. And there is nothing that we ought to look more carefully into than our dislikes and antipathies. I like to see a good hater; but a good hater is one who hates the right things. Before we take up our club to fight any proposed policy or reform we ought to be sure we dislike it because we know it isn't good, rather than for some very much less worthy reason. Being the men we are, that first reason stands a good chance of not always covering the ground. And to call good things evil, by reason of some moral twist or bias, is about one of the worst sins we can be guilty of. If we have a heart to like good things we are not in great danger of ever calling them bad.

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Lay me to sleep in sheltering flame,  
O Master of the Hidden Fire!  
Wash pure my heart, and cleanse for me  
My soul's desire.

In flame of sunrise bathe my mind,  
O Master of the Hidden Fire,  
That, when I wake, clear eyed may be  
My soul's desire.

—WILLIAM SHARP



*And he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*

—Matthew 10: 39

## A GREAT LESSON

5/9/25

THERE are a great many people who are learning these days the very wonderful lesson that, somewhere at the secret heart of sacrifice and self-giving there are springs of happiness and delight that are not to be found anywhere else in all God's great universe. Not a few who have heretofore thought of satisfaction chiefly in terms of possession, or attainment, or use, have suddenly stumbled across the truth that there is a better and more real way of life. The doing without things for oneself in order to have to give to others, has been found to be, not an irksome task, but a real joy and satisfaction. In toil and labor for others, or for a great cause, many have found delight and a pleasure of quite a new and vital sort, when compared with anything that mere amusement or gain or achievement ever yielded. In fact, thousands who have never really seen it before have come to understand in a most personal way that what the great Master said about saving one's life by losing it is not a bristling paradox, but a great and fundamental and beneficent law of life. Gladness, joy, satisfaction—these things meant as much to Him as they did to any man who ever lived, but He knew what they really were, and how they might be won as no one before or since has ever known. To learn that lesson from Him is the truest wisdom.

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Peace does not mean the end of all our striving,  
 Joy does not mean the drying of our tears;  
 Peace is the power that comes to souls arriving  
 Up to the light where God Himself appears.

Joy in the wine that God is ever pouring  
 Into the hearts of those who strive with Him,  
 Light'ning their eyes to vision and adoring,  
 Strength'ning their arms to warfare glad and grim.

—G. A. STUDDERT KENNEDY

*Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.*

—Proverbs 9: 17

### THE DAY AFTER

6/9/25  
THERE are a good many things that can only be best judged in the clear and sober light of the morning after. That kind and generous and self-forgetful thing that you did yesterday, what a glow and freshness it gives you to-day, even when you are not thinking of it consciously at all. It is worth more to you now in positive vital force, and conscious strength and cheer, than it cost you in time or money or effort many times over. But how the memory of that wrong and mean thing you did that night haunted you in the sunlight of the next day, and sent you to your daily toil with some of the feelings of a whipped cur. "Stolen waters are sweet" the wise man said, but the saying only proves that even wise men sometimes utter very foolish speeches. Stolen waters are never sweet, at least they never are the day after. And the thing that does not leave a sweet taste in your mouth, the thing that you cannot look at with some satisfaction the next day when an honest sun shines out of a clear blue sky, was a poor and foolish thing for you to do. We cannot afford to spoil our to-morrows after such a reckless and stupid fashion as that, for when we have spoiled them how can we have left any to-days to give us joy and satisfaction? No, we cannot afford anything else than to walk the straight, honest, sun-clear pathway. At times it may be hard to keep in it, but it is never as hard afterward as the other. In fact that seemingly easy road of wrong-doing is the one hard way of life, as many a man has proved.

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To veer, how vain! On, onward strain,  
Brave barks! In light, in darkness too,  
Through winds and tides one compass guides—  
To that, and your own selves be true.

—ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

*But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

—Romans 8: 25

## ON LEARNING TO WAIT

FOR some of us that is the hardest of all possible lessons to learn. We dearly love to have things happen when we wish them to, and it is the sorest of all trials to have to wait, and wait, and wait, for them. But unless we learn the lesson of patience, unless we do really learn to wait, courageously and without fret, our failure will spoil our lives of much of their effectiveness, and perhaps help to spoil some other folks' lives in various ways, too. It might help us some to remember that even God Himself has to wait for many things. For instance we must try His patience sorely. We go off into ways of sin and folly and stupidity, and He does wait so graciously and magnanimously for us to come back into the paths of wisdom and sanity again. To imagine that He had forgotten to be patient with us, even for a day, would surely call up a terrible picture of tragedy and disaster. He doesn't forget, however. Our pleasure is sought for everywhere else but in Him, but He waits until at long last disappointment sends us back to the one centre of joy and happiness. Thinking of this ought to make waiting just a little easier for us. The God of infinite patience would help us to learn the lesson. And I am sure that He knows that it is very important that we do learn it.

---

God waits,—has waited long—still waits;  
 Each dawn His promise He reiterates,  
 And down the long dim corridors of Time  
 His word reverberates,—  
 "Choose Ye this day!"

From our own wilful way  
 He calls us back,  
 And promises again this day  
 That no soul based on Him shall suffer lack.

—JOHN OXENHAM

7/9/20

*That ye may approve the things that are excellent.*

—*Philippians 1: 10*

## THE THINGS THAT COUNT

8/9/25  
 WHO is to say which ones they are? We call some deeds little and others big; we put some in the list of specially worthy, while others seem to us very insignificant and common-place, and yet we know all the time that we are doing it that our standards of measure and appraisement are hardly just and satisfactory. The act that makes the immediately fine and big impression is apt to count for more with all of us than it deserves to, while the thing that looks small only because its virtue and vitality are not out in the open is often judged of little import. And yet the things that live and mould history and shape destiny are often in the latter class. The man who gives an idea to the world is frequently forgotten and neglected, but it is he of all men who counts in the life of the race, though oftener than not he knows nothing of it. Sometimes it is very difficult to say what deeds will count greatly in history, but this we can be sure of, that no deed finely done, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem, will be without its influence somewhere and at some time. And that is the difficulty with many of us, to keep on finely doing the things that do not seem at all big and important. But in the final analysis the lives of most of us will count only as we succeed in doing that.

---

Thou wouldst be hero? Wait not then supinely  
 For fields of fine romance which no day brings.  
 The finest life lies oft in doing finely  
 A multitude of unromantic things.

The heroism of thy true endeavor  
 Shall gild the commonplace of common days,  
 And God himself shall guard thy work for ever,  
 And crown it with eternity of praise.

—EDWARD CRACROFT LEFROY

*Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: yea, with all thou hast gotten get understanding.*

—Proverbs 4: 7

## THINK ON THESE THINGS

9/9/28

THERE never was a time when the duty of thinking was more imperative than it is to-day. Life is studied with problems, problems most intricate and difficult of solution, problems that a mere attitude of sympathy and good-will will never take us through at all. The task of living righteously and in a truly Christian way in this modern, involved life of ours, is not an easy one, and it is made so difficult largely by reasons of the fact that the way of duty and the highest good is seldom plain and easy to see. And this is true, whether we are thinking just of our own individual life, or of the broader world of human progress and well-being. The finest of fine living comes only as something of a discovery, and we never discover without searching. Men do not stumble stupidly into splendid goodness and fine achievement, but they learn the way of it by thought and the slowly-achieved gift of fine discernment. The task of living well, and helping the world to live well, will never be accomplished apart from earnest, consecutive, hard thinking. Merely wishing things well never gets us very far unless the intellect is as active as the heart is sympathetic. The world never needed more than it needs to-day a body of Christian men and women who are ready to consecrate brain as well as heart to the great work of building the Kingdom of God in the earth, and making human institutions over in the likeness of that Kingdom.

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With ignorance wage eternal war, to know thyself for ever strain;  
 Thine ignorance of thine ignorance is thy fiercest foe, thy deadliest  
     bane,  
 That blunts thy sense, and dulls thy taste; that deafs thine ear, and  
     blinds thine eyes;  
 Creates the thing that never was, the thing that ever is defies.

—RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON



*But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. —Matthew 10: 22*

## UNTO THE END

10/9/25  
THERE is no grace in all the long list more frequently or urgently asked for in God's Book than the grace of persistence. The glory of going on is reiterated over and over and over again. On almost every page we are assured that any man who puts his hand to the plough and then turns back before the long furrow is turned is unfit for the Kingdom. And no matter what the kingdom is that is sought for, that is absolutely and unqualifiedly true. Everywhere and at all times the demand is for the man who ploughs his furrow to the end. At times it seems a distressingly long one, and the temptation to quit is strong. But quitting really is not easier, it only seems so. Stopping before one's task is done is most uncomfortable and unsatisfactory. It is better to push on. Better for oneself. Life has little comfort if controlled by flabby irresoluteness. And better for one's task. Nothing of great moment gets done easily, and the work of life that both God and our conscience will call good, will be the work that we have stayed with, heroically and faithfully, reward or no reward, glory or no glory, right up to the end. I said that it was sometimes hard work staying with our task that way, but probably that statement needs modifying. One can develop an instinct for persistence, so that staying with things becomes a real joy. Indeed many a man has found his greatest pleasure in life in keeping at some hard, yet worth-while task until he brought it through to a successful issue.

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Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song;

Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—

Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—

Nay, but she aimed not at glory, no lover of glory she:

Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

—LORD TENNYSON



*So teach us to number our days, that we may get us an heart of wisdom.*

—Psalm 90: 12

## LIFE'S LITTLE STAGE

11/9/25

I HEARD the other day a very solemn preachment on the brevity of life, and somehow it did not impress me very much at all. As a matter of fact such pious homilies on the shortness of our earthly existence are more likely to annoy some people than they are to put them in a specially spiritual frame of mind. Of course life is short; we know all about that, so what is the use talking about it. And are we sure that a mere lengthening of it would improve it very greatly? Suppose a thousand years was set as the limit of life instead of three score years and ten, would the joy and satisfaction of life be thereby multiplied by more than ten? I very much doubt if they would. It may be that the spur and impulse that the thought of its brevity gives us, more than makes good the want of all those years. At any rate shedding any tears over the fact of the briefness of life is the emptiest folly we can be guilty of. The fact that life is short and fleeting should only stir us up to the task of filling it fuller of zest, and earnestness, of gladness of heart, and unselfishness of service. The only way to make up on the shortness of life is by adding to its quality. Joy and goodness cannot be measured by days, neither can any of the things that are most worthwhile be reckoned up by the clock.

Because the rose must fade,  
 Shall I not love the rose?  
 Because the summer shade  
 Passes when winter blows,  
 Shall I not rest me there  
 In the cool air?

Because the sunset sky  
 Makes music in my soul,  
 Only to fail and die,  
 Shall I not take the whole  
 Of beauty that it gives  
 While yet it lives?

Ah, yes, because the rose  
 Fades like the sunset skies;  
 Because rude winter blows  
 All bare, and music dies—  
 Therefore now is to me  
 Eternity.

—RICHARD WATSON GILDER

*Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

—Revelation 3: 20

## FINDING WITHOUT SEEKING

12-9-25  
SOME folks seem to find but little joy in life, but I cannot believe that it was ever intended to be so with any single child of man. Happiness, genuine, deep-based, enduring, is a possibility in every life, indeed it is a duty and binding obligation as well. It isn't because of some wicked perversity that men seek it, for the instinct after it is of divine implanting. We try to find it in wrong ways, and foolishly think it may be come at in wrong places, but we make no mistake in believing in its possibility, and in its infinite value. Of course our fundamental mistake lies in believing that it can be found in things. That may seem a trite statement, but it shows us the root of nearly all the unhappiness of life. Happiness comes because of what is within a man and never because of what is outside of him, no matter how large or favoring that outside world may be. If a man's heart have such things in it as hope and kindness and faith it will also have happiness, for happiness always comes where it may have such congenial companionship. So you do not need to search for happiness at all; if you just give it room and good company it will come of itself.

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I know a place where the sun is like gold,  
And the cherry blossoms burst with snow,  
And down underneath is the loveliest nook,  
Where four-leaf clovers grow.

One leaf is for hope, and one is for faith,  
And one is for love, you know,  
And God put another in for luck,—  
If you search, you will find where they grow.

But you must have hope, and you must have faith,  
You must love and be strong—and so,  
If you work, if you wait, you will find the place  
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.

ELLA HIGGINSON

*Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one.*

—Colossians 4: 6

## OF THE OLD SCHOOL

13/9/26

WE HEAR about gentlemen of the old school, but when it comes to a matter of that sort there is not much difference in schools. To be a gentleman of any school is good enough. There is a difference between being a gentleman and playing the gentleman. The latter is a matter of good clothes, fashionable tastes and formal manners; the former is more a question of internal quality. One of the most tiresome things to have to look at is a man playing the gentleman who isn't one. It is very hard to look the thing that one is not, something is sure to give it away. The surest way, the only way, of looking a gentleman is to be one. The fact that sometimes it seems the hardest way only serves to emphasize the truth. Of course the way to become a gentleman is honestly to speak and try to act like one, so that good manners count for something after all. But cultivating good manners means the cultivation of something else as well. Good manners mean kindly and gracious speech, and thoughtfulness and consideration for others, qualities that go far toward making a man a gentleman. A gentleman isn't just a man with good clothes and a polished action, a gentleman is—well, he's just a gentleman, and if you do not understand I fear there is little use trying to explain. And I am sure that it is well worth while trying to be one by the only method that it can be done.

---

Scarce had he need to cast his pride  
Or slough the dross of earth.  
Even as he trod, that day of God  
So walked he from his birth,  
In simpleness and gentleness  
And honour and clean mirth.

—RUDYARD KIPLING

*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*  
*—Matthew 11: 29*

## PAYING THE PRICE

14/9/25  
**DO NOT** ever get it into your head that when you are asked to make sacrifices for a great cause, you are asked to do any out-of-the-way or unreasonable thing. Since the beginning of time it has been that no great or good cause has had any other way of getting on. Every road of human progress has been strewn with the gifts and sacrifices of men. And that there is nothing unjust or unkind about this arrangement is shown over and over again throughout the whole soul history of the race, for men and women have never been able to find any joy or satisfaction like that which they know through giving. It is the law of heaven, the thought of God Himself, written over all things earthly and human. As men give and sacrifice, wisely, intelligently, and yet with abandon and utter wholeheartedness, they enter into the secret of the joy of God and taste of the very fulness of life. And the man who will not pay the price that love asks, knows nothing of the gladness God can pour into a human soul. In fact the man who will not pay that price knows nothing at all of life in its reality and goodness and satisfaction. The price is nothing when we think what we get for it.

---

Grief halted at my door.  
 "My burden's great, and I'm footsore,"  
 Said he.  
 "Then come thou in!"  
 I cried.  
 "The supper's spread—  
 The sweet rye bread."  
 Grief put his burden down,  
 And stepped inside,  
 And, parting, left a gift with me—  
 The world-wide gift of sympathy.

—RENA CARY SHEFFIELD

*Till we all attain . . . unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

—Ephesians 4: 13

## DOING ONE'S BEST

15/9/28

A MAN really never knows when he has reached his best. Given a resolute will and fixity of purpose, the good of to-day can be made better to-morrow in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred. In the matters that really count, progress and improvement are possible right up to the very gates of death—after that we fancy they will be still more possible. All that is necessary to make our own best a little better is the steady, upward striving, the steady, upward striving that has faith and hope and expectation in it, and that sees new possibilities and opportunities along every way of life. It is a terribly crippling delusion that makes us think at any time that we have reached our highest and best. Nothing will send us down in standard of achievement and purposing quicker than to cherish even secretly that conviction, and it is the devil, who is always a pronounced believer in the second best, the unambitious, the commonplace, who encourages us mightily in such a conviction. But no matter what he says, our best may and ought to be ever ahead of us. Of course this philosophy does not make life easy, but it does make it worth while. Climbing isn't easy, but the zest and triumph of it are great and splendid.

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Heaven is not reached by a single bound;  
 But we build the ladder by which we rise  
 From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,  
 And we mount to its summit round by round.

I count this thing as grandly true;  
 That a noble deed is a step toward God,  
 Lifting the soul from the common clod  
 To a purer air and a broader view.

We rise by the things that are under our feet;  
 By what we have mastered of good and gain;  
 By the pride deposed and the passion slain,  
 And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet.

—J. G. HOLLAND



*Remember Lot's wife.*
*—Luke 17: 32*

## SALT SPARKLES

16/9/25  
 “REMEMBER Lot's wife.” Yes, of course, but why not remember Lot himself. As a tragic warning and a conspicuous example of how not to do it, he occupies a much larger space upon that old Bible canvas than his wife does. Why not use him to point the moral instead of her? Yes, why not? As we have heard that verse roll off masculine lips with considerable unction we have been tempted to ask that question right out in meeting. “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat.” Is it possible that Adam gave us men the trick and we have been keeping it up ever since? “The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.” Is that fine sentiment and chivalry or is it a comfortable masculine way of trying to get rid of responsibility? What are we men doing to make the world clean and sweet and good? Not very much, indeed, it would seem sometimes, and one of the reasons is that we imagine we can lay pretty nearly the entire job off on our sisters and our mothers and our wives. But we can't, and isn't it a rather cowardly business to try? Just for the looks of the thing it would be as well for most men to find their admonitions and warnings against worldliness in masculine biographies. It might look a little more sincere if we were to get our lesson from them. And there are plenty of them that stand out for warning; yes thank God, and for inspiration too. Suppose for a little while we men did not bother ourselves very much about either feminine vices or feminine virtues, but took a real good look at some of our own! It might be very profitable.

---

Woman, they say, was only made of man:  
 Methinks 'tis strange they should be so unlike!  
 It may be all the best was cut away  
 To make the woman, and that naught was left  
 Behind with him.

—BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER



*But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself—Acts 20: 24*

## SAFETY FIRST

19/9/25

THAT man has learned very little in the great school of life who does not know that he will find infinitely more satisfaction in resolutely facing the stern, hard duty than he can ever hope to in running away from it for something which is soft and easy. "'Tis man's perdition to be safe, when for the truth he ought to die." It is really an easier and a more comfortable thing to die for the truth, that is worth dying for, and that we are called upon to defend, than it is to live, a soft and easy traitor to it. That is not a mere bit of rhapsody, but a fact learned through many centuries of human experience. We can never get any consciousness that is worth so much to us as the consciousness that we have done what we ought to have done, and with that we can easily forget that we have paid a stern price in the doing of it, indeed the price paid usually seems of very little moment. "Safety first" may be a good motto in some matters, but it is a very poor and pagan one in the realm of ethics. "Duty first" is really a safer, and indeed a much more comfortable, one to follow. And if your cynic friend laughs at you when you preach that philosophy, do not let it trouble you. The cynic's laugh always reveals this fact, that there isn't a grain of joy in the cynic's heart, so what should you think of his philosophy?

---

When round thy ship in tempest Hell appears,  
 And every spectre mutters up more dire  
 To snatch control  
 And loose to madness thy keep-kenneled fears—  
 Then to the helm, O soul!

Last, if upon the cold, green-mantling sea,  
 Thou cling alone with Truth, to the last spar,  
 Both castaway,  
 And one must perish—let it not be he  
 Whom thou art sworn to obey.

—HERBERT TRENCH

*For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

—Romans 8: 22

## THE TASK OF GETTING ON

18/9/25

THAT great man and great pessimist, Dean Inge, has recently delivered a series of lectures on *Progress*, in which, amid much that is distressingly discouraging, and perhaps untrue in perspective, he says one strong, wholesome word that needs saying badly. "Progress in all those things which are most worth while in human life is not an inevitable law of nature, but a task that must be achieved." In our easy-going way we had just about forgotten that, or at least had let the great challenging philosophy of it drop out of our practical thinking and living. We had not said it openly, perhaps, but we had let the subtle idea that evolution carries with it a guarantee of progress affect us greatly. But Dean Inge is right; humanity does not get on of necessity at all; it gets on as an achievement, through struggle and sacrifice and hard fighting, after the spirit and according to the ideal of Jesus Christ. The hope of the world is not in evolution, even though the great majority of people have come to see that that great principle has application to all of life. The hope of the world lies in the men and women who are willing to pay, in struggle and blood and tears, the tremendous price of progress, just as Jesus paid it.

Yea, cast our lives into the ancient slough  
 And fall we shouting, with uplifted face;  
 Over the spot where, mired, we struggle now  
 Shall march in triumph a transfigured race.  
 They shall exult where, weary, we have wept—  
 They shall achieve where we have striven in vain—  
 Leaping in vigor where we faintly crept,  
 Joyous along the road we paved with pain.  
 What though we seem to sink in the morass?  
 Under those unborn feet our dust shall sing,  
 When o'er our failure perfect they shall pass.  
 Forth and make firm a highway for the King!

—AMELIA JOSEPHINE BURR

*There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?*

—*Psalm 4: 6*

## WHO WILL SHOW US ANY GOOD?

THE times are out of joint. The restlessness, dissatisfaction and conflict of the world seem to increase rather than diminish, and the day of peace, toward which we have been looking for so long, seems yet to fade away into the far distant future. So the heart and hope of many are failing them. But there are some things that we must not forget in a day like this. It is true there is much restlessness and strife, and yet in the midst of these there are great recreative and reconstructive forces at work. In the home life of the people, in the thoughts and plans of men and women, in earnest and honest effort to realize the great impulses that have come to us through the war, there is a mighty reconstructive movement going on all the while that does not reveal itself at all through the outward strife and turmoil. We may cheer our hearts with this thought that even in a day like this the mighty Spirit of God is renewing Himself in righteousness and hope, and joy, in the lives and thoughts and ambitions of the people. What a pity if we failed to see and understand this! What a pity if we should go around complaining that God and goodness were dead, when all the time they were but struggling into new birth in the lives of men and of nations—a birth into which we should be helping them by every means which lay in our power.

---

Where are the swallows fled?  
 Frozen or dead,  
 Perchance upon some bleak and  
 stormy shore.  
 O doubting heart!  
 Far over the purple seas,  
 They wait in sunny ease  
 The balmy southern breeze,  
 To bring them to their northern  
 homes once more.

Why must the flowers die?  
 Prison'd they lie  
 In the cold tomb, heedless of  
 tears or rain.  
 O doubting heart!  
 They only sleep below  
 The soft white ermine snow,  
 While winter winds shall blow,  
 To breathe and smile upon you  
 soon again.

—ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTOR

*And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had spied out unto the children of Israel.*  
*—Numbers 13: 32*

## A FALSE REPORT AGAINST HIM

26/9/25  
**T**HE incongruity of the sad and dolorous report of things that we have from numbers of Christian people in these days ought to strike any thoughtful person who at all remembers the fundamental facts of Christian history. We do not find any trace of pessimism, do we, in the first announcement of the Gospel, which was heralded as glad tidings of great joy to all the world? He who came bearing that message never once through all His earthly life showed anything of fear or hopelessness or distrust. He spoke of Himself as life and light, and used up nearly all the beautiful figures He could think of to illustrate His thought of what His Gospel would work out in the history of the world. And His last message to His disciples was an exhortation to hope and believe in the best. With such a beginning to Christian history why should there be anything at this date to justify the abandoned pessimism that many people are indulging in? Of course things do not look so very bright at times, but were they any brighter in Jesus' day, when He was so hopeful about them? And how can we make it appear that we are faithful and true to Him if we deny the spirit of hope and expectation that was as the very heart of His life? Is it not true that the pessimistic Christian of to-day is guilty of bearing a false witness against his Master in the very thing that meant most to Him?

---

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable Name?

Builder and Maker, thou, of houses not made with hands!

What, have fear of change from thee who art ever the same?

Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy power expands?

There shall never be one lost good! What was shall live as before;

The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound;

What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;

On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven a perfect round.

—ROBERT BROWNING

*Be ye free from the love of money ; content with such things as ye have.*

*Hebrews 13: 5*

## THE MAN TO PITY

21/9/25

THERE is only about one man in all this world that I am really sorry for. He is not the man who has to work hard for a living; he is not the man of limited means and humble sphere of life; he is not the man without name or fame or ancestry or traditions. All of those conditions have their compensations, so great sometimes as to make one question whether they are really blessings or not. No, the man that I pity with all my heart is the man who shuts himself up to himself and lives his narrow, stunted life in the two-by-four compass of his own selfish interests. He may have a million or two, or he may have nothing; it makes practically no difference as to his enjoyment of life or as to his usefulness in the world. If he is supremely selfish he is supremely miserable, and nothing else can be made of it. There is no prison-house that confines as miserably or as completely as does that prison-house of selfishness. To that prisoner never comes the sunlight of a real joy or the bliss of sweet content, or any of the real happiness that life was made for. He may pile himself round with the so-called good things of life, but the higher the pile becomes the more completely does it shut out the warmth of the sun and the beauty of the stars.

---

Art thou poor; yet hast thou golden slumbers?

O, sweet content!

Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexed?

O, punishment!

Dost thou laugh, to see how fools are vexed

To add to golden numbers, golden numbers?

O, sweet content! O, sweet content!

Work apace, apace, apace, apace;

Honest labor bears a lovely face;

Then hey nonny, nonny; hey nonny, nonny!

—THOMAS DEKKER



(Love)... *believeth all things, hopeth all things.*

—1 Corinthians 13: 7

## OUR PERFORMANCE

WE ALL have our aspirations, aspirations, too, after something that is fine and noble. But the performance is very much poorer than what we purpose and plan; in fact oftener than not the performance is so poor that no one looking at it would ever suspect us of the aspiration at all. But might it not be safe for us to conclude that the other fellow is very much like we are? We look at him from the outside and we could hardly dream that he was thinking of and planning the fine and noble things that we are. But probably he is, even though his performance may be very poor indeed. It is only fair to give him a chance in our thought of him, and to make some allowances in his case, as we are usually quite ready to make in our own. It may help him to see that we understand that the man on the outside is not always the man at his best. To know that another believes in our aspirations may help greatly to make our realizing better. Certainly a great many men have gone on to fine living because some friend had more faith in them than outside appearances might justify. Of course it probably is true, as some folks insist, that there are people in the world who are very much worse than they appear. How many there are I do not know; but anyway I am going to keep believing in the other kind. And I am sure that there are a great number of them.

---

Better trust all and be deceived,  
 And weep that trust and that deceiving,  
 Than doubt one heart that, if believed,  
 Had blessed one's life with true believing.

Oh, in this mocking world, too fast  
 The doubting fiend o'ertakes our youth;  
 Better be cheated to the last  
 Than lose the blessed hope of truth.

—FRANCES ANN KEMBLE



*And he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day.*

—Luke 4: 16

## THE LAW OF HABIT

23/9/25

**I** WAS really startled the other day by the statement that habit-making was simply a matter of mathematics. What was meant, of course, was that all that was necessary to get into the habit of doing a certain thing was to do it often enough. Consideration of the proposition convinced me that, within certain limitations, it was absolutely correct, and that it applied to good habits quite as much as to bad. And this, I thought, meant that even the weakest kind of man is provided with a certain power or force in life that, if he will only use it, will in a wonderful way help to strengthen and establish him in righteousness. All that is necessary to become a man of clean habits and strong, wholesome life is to keep doing clean, strong, wholesome things long enough. Of course, that is where the rub comes, and the man who tries to do it without some divine reinforcing of his spirit will fail of the best and highest, but it will help a great deal to remember that the Creator put a marvellous instrument of good in our hand when He made that law of habit. We sometimes complain against Him, do we not? But when we reckon everything up, He has put a good many helps along the way of life that make goodness and fine living easier and more attractive. And often, as in this case, we pervert His intended blessings and then complain when they make life hard and uncomfortable for us. Sometimes we talk as if bad habits were the only possible ones a man could form, or at least that it was much easier and more natural to make them than the other kind. But such a notion is a quite mistaken one.

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“How shall I a habit break?”

As you did the habit make;  
As you gathered, you must lose;  
As you yielded, now refuse.

—JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY

*Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*

—Acts 14: 22

## THE COST OF GETTING ON

24/9/28  
**E**VERY reasonable man has a desire that life should move along with as little friction as possible, and that the world in which he lives should enjoy as far as may be the sunny smile of peace and comfort. But any one has not had much experience of life who imagines that absolute ease and relief from disturbance and worry are possible, and the one who is insisting on these things too strongly is not counting for much in the progress and climb-up of things human. Somehow we get on by means of friction and struggle, and the successful life, even from the highest point of view, must have much experience of these things. Life, among other things, is a fight, a fight against many foes to its truest good, and fighting does not suggest uninterrupted comfort and unbroken slumber through every night. And it is one of the strange anomalies of life that after all we get most real comfort out of not trying to be too comfortable, but by just forging ahead and doing the things that seem to need to be done, even at the cost of great sacrifice and loss and struggle. I have often seen it and I am sure you have too, that those people who insisted the strongest that they must not be disturbed, but must be left comfortable at all cost, seemed to get the poorest kind of satisfaction out of it all.

---

Work! Thank God for the might of it,  
The ardor, the urge, the delight of it—  
Work that springs from the heart's desire,  
Setting the brain and the soul on fire—

Oh what is so good as the heat of it,  
And what is so glad as the beat of it,  
And what is so kind as the stern command,  
Challenging brain and heart and hand!

—ANGELA MORGAN

*If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream. —Numbers 12: 6*

## IN PRAISE OF DREAMERS

25/9/28.

A PRACTICAL and matter-of-fact age is not likely to give them due appreciation, and yet what would any age be without them! Even the great inventions of a day like this are the products, not of the "practical" people, but of the dreamers. Would we have any literature at all worthy of the name if it were not for the people who think long thoughts, who see visions and dream dreams! Are not the great benefactors of our race the people who have commerce in thoughts and ideas and ideals, rather than in mere things! Has not the man who has created a great poem done more for human progress and happiness than the man who has built a great city or founded an empire! These creations of the mind—we speak slightly of them sometimes, but are they not after all the things that endure, the things that are vital and creative and all-prevailing! In all ages men have slighted and despised and killed the dreamers, but at a later day they have worshipped at their shrine and rejoiced in the vision which they cherished. Can we say too much in praise of the people who will persist in shutting their eyes and looking far away to distant days and deep into the heart of things! What each age does with the dreamers will decide its destiny.

---

Dreams are they—but they are God's dreams.  
 Shall we decry them and scorn them?  
 That men shall love one another,  
 That white shall call black man brother,  
 That greed shall pass from the market-place,  
 That lust shall yield to love for the race,  
 That man shall meet with God face to face—  
 Dreams are they all,

But shall we despise them—God's dreams?

—THOMAS CURTIS CLARK

*And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.*

—Deuteronomy 34: 7

## LIVING TO ONE HUNDRED

26/9/25 'THE work never gets all done up. The new day brings its troop of new duties. We can never sit down and feel that all the burdens have fallen from us. Sometimes we get tired of that, but there is quite another side to the matter. If the work never all gets past us, neither do the opportunities; if there are new duties every day so are there new hopes and new ambitions. Or at least there ought to be. There is no reason in the world why a man should not keep on doing new things, attacking new propositions, dreaming new dreams, right up till he is one hundred years old at least. Most of us would easily live that long if we filled up every day with the elixir of something new and fresh and stimulating. But we so easily let ourselves get dull and self-centred and unambitious, and settle down as if there were no new days, or rosy dawns, or fresh opportunities left anywhere in life. But there are, many of them, to every man who opens his eyes to see, his heart to feel, and his hands to do. The doctors may say what they like, but the one way to a happy old age is to keep hopefully, enthusiastically busy. And the way is surely open to the most of us. And thank God if we have the sense to see it!

---

When I grow old,  
 God grant that every child  
 Will feel the youthful texture of my soul!  
 And will not turn away from me  
 As from a shade or shrunken vine,  
 When I grow old.

When I grow old,  
 God grant that I may have some task  
 Which must be done, or some one fare the worse—  
 That in some corner of the earth  
 Some one will need my hand,  
 When I grow old.

—E. R. PEYSER

*Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.*

—Philippians 2: 4

27/9/25

## THE OTHER FELLOW

GIVE him a kindly, brotherly thought at least once in a while. Make him the centre of things occasionally, instead of yourself. Get into the habit of seeing a few things from his point of view. As you value the best things for which men were made, do not make all life a competition, and all humanity a field for your exploitation. Of course you can get ahead of the other fellow, if you try hard enough, and act meanly enough, but the net result of it all is bound to be terribly disappointing, and probably terribly disastrous, too. The money in your pocket that ought justly to be in his may not burn a hole and get out, but it may do something very much worse than that, it may burn and scar and scorch your own soul. It is really a rather serious matter living alongside the other fellow. What we do with him may be important from his point of view, but it is very much more important and critical from our point of view. Indeed the whole matter of our own happiness and destiny is wrapped up in our treatment of the other fellow. When God made him and put him alongside you, He created both a great problem and a great opportunity for you. And I do not think He is as interested in anything else about you, as He is in what you do with that problem and opportunity. And I am sure also that the whole question of your own happiness and satisfaction depends almost altogether on what you do with that problem and opportunity that the other fellow living beside you creates. Treat him honorably and as a brother should and your whole life will know a peace and joy that will be very satisfying.

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I built a chimney for a comrade old,  
 I did the service not for hope or hire—  
 And then I travelled on in winter's cold,  
 Yet all the way I glowed before the fire.

—EDWIN MARKHAM



*Let your forbearance (margin—gentleness) be known to all men.*

—Philippians 4: 5

8/9/28-

## ARE YOU EASY TO LIVE WITH?

THE fact that a man or woman is easy to live with does not indicate without question that he or she is in possession of all the virtues in the calendar, but it is pretty safe wagering that the one who is hard to live with has a few vices, and rather serious ones too. Of course we know there are some people who are very hard to get along with, who claim that the reason is that they are uncompromising in their principles. But that explanation has very seldom seemed convincing. Unless you are a great exception to the rule, and the chances are that you are not, you are hard to get along with because you insist on having your own way, and give too little consideration to other people. And that attitude toward life in general is not a virtuous one by any means. We are told of a certain woman who made it the sum of all her praying for herself, that she might be made easy to live with. Perhaps she didn't go far enough in her praying, but just the same if that prayer were answered for every one, there would be a great many cranks made over into something useful, and this world would be a vastly pleasanter place to live in. If you cannot think of many things to pray for it really might not be amiss to include that one in your list. And then, of course, you will do your best to answer your own prayer.

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A happy bit hame this auld world would be  
 If men, when they're here, could make shift to agree,  
 An' ilk said to his neighbor, in cottage and ha',  
 "Come, gie me your hand—we are brethren a'.

I ken not why ane wi' anither should fight,  
 When to 'gree would make ae body cosie and right,  
 When man meets wi' man, 'tis the best way ava.  
 To say, "Gie me your hand—we are brethren a'.

—ROBERT NICHOLL



*If it were not so, I would have told you.*

—John 14: 2

## A GROUND OF FAITH

DARE we put any confidence and assurance in that line of argument which says that the persistent instincts and convictions of men must have their root somewhere in absolute reality? Perhaps we ought not to answer that question with an unyielding affirmative, and yet surely an absolute negative is impossible. It would have to be a very unrelated and inconsequent universe indeed if the men living in our section of it would be compelled, everywhere and through all the centuries, to cherish some kind of faith in a Supreme Being, and that Being have no actual existence. That the conception held in many cases might be a quite misleading and inadequate one, we could readily admit, but that it lead nowhere and affirmed no reality would surely involve an altogether irrational and disorderly creation. A necessitated belief in a Divine Being comes very near to necessitating such a Being. And such validity as that line of argument has, may be made to serve over quite a wide field. Men have always cherished some sort of hope in an immortal life. Often it was very shadowy and uncertain. But always the germ of it had a place among men. Always some land of promise and hope and fulfillment stretched away into the far-off future and men stayed their hearts upon the vision and thought of it. If there be no genuine reality to correspond with that hope and longing, is there left to us any method of explaining the hope and longing?

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Somewhere beyond—I know not where,  
 Beneath what fair unclouded skies;  
 I only know beyond—somewhere,  
 The Land of Fulfilled Promise lies.

I hear the call, I see the light—  
 A sure clear gleam upon the way;  
 And up the steep, across the night,  
 I go to meet the certain Day.

—MARY CROMWELL LOW

*And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*

*—Isaiah 55: 12*

## THE FALLING OF A LEAF

THE old Hebrew prophets were very fond of drawing morals from the falling of the leaves. "We all do fade as a leaf," was one of their favorite refrains. In that, of course, they were not peculiar, for men in all ages have been moralists, and this commonest of all the phenomena of nature has ever suggested its message of tenderness and regret. Yes, even to-day men are drawing their lessons from the falling of the leaf. But how do the leaves fade and fall? We are assured, in the first place, that the process is a natural one. The falling of the leaves is not a tragedy in nature, but one of its inevitable processes, without which there could be no life of fruitfulness. And then the leaves for the most part fade and fall so gloriously! To see the riot of color in the autumn woods ought surely to remind us that this process of nature is one in which Nature herself, and Nature's God, greatly rejoice. We ought rather to joy and rejoice in it than to let it fill us with regret and the thought of tragedy. And then, too, might it not be possible for us to let Nature teach us a lesson in this matter? The fading and the falling leaf tells us that life ought to have its glorious consummation, that we ought to grow old joyously, hopefully, splendidly, and not sadly and regretfully. And if we find that difficult, at least we ought to recognize the fact that such is the ideal given us to cherish.

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When Autumn flings her banners wide upon October air,  
 All nature seems to thank its God for making life so fair—  
 The hills go robed in amethyst, the trees are dressed in fire;  
 The very air seems thrilling with a passionless desire.

One somehow feels that God on High must love this season best;  
 He holds it as a mother holds a babe close to her breast.  
 The pressure of His hand is on all nature, like a prayer—  
 When Autumn flings her banners wide upon October air!

—MARGARET E. SANGSTER

## OCTOBER

*Sweet summer is gone; they have laid her  
away—*

*The last sad hours that were touched with  
her grace—*

*In the hush where the ghosts of the dead flowers  
play;*

*The sleep that is sweet of her slumbering  
space*

*Let not a sight nor a sound erase*

*Of all the woe that hath fallen on all the lands;*

*Gather ye, Dreams, to her sunny face,*

*Shadow her head with your golden hands.*

—ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN



*For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth; the Lord, the God of hosts, is his name.*

—Amos 4: 13

## IN OCTOBER DAYS

1/10/25.

THE God who made October days in this north land of ours must be a Being to whom beauty and color and freshness are an infinite joy and delight. We can never doubt that, if we journey through these days with our eyes open at all. If He had given us only a little of these things we might have been sceptical, but now that He has heaped them up before us, and made all the world run riot with them, we must believe that He is One to whom such things are the very breath of life. It ought to be easy for us to believe in the goodness of God, and in the possible goodness of everything which He has made, to-day when the golden October sunshine is over all the earth, and the breezes that stir seem as if they had passed over a garden which He alone had planted. And if we could only see to-day, in all its matchless glory and beauty, as an expression of His thought, and an indication of the trend of His purposing, it ought to be a great deal easier for us than it often has been to rejoice and be glad in Him and to call everything good which He has made. And if we could feel that way about it, would we not add another touch of golden glory to the world upon which we look at this moment? To-day in itself is wonderful, but to-day as a thought of God is more wonderful still.

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A haze on the far horizon,  
 The infinite tender sky,  
 The ripe, rich tint of the corn fields,  
 And the wild geese sailing high,  
 And all over upland and lowland  
 The charm of the golden rod—  
 Some of us call it Autumn  
 And others call it God.

—WILLIAM HERBERT CARRUTH

*His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.*

—Habakkuk 3: 3

## THE GLORY OF THE LORD

THAT is surely what these wondrous autumn days are revealing unto us! Trees are fascinating, beautiful things at any time but how much more so are they when the early frosts have touched them into scarlet and flame and gold! What one sees to-day as he looks out over this fair northern land of ours is beauty in its very essence and fulness—a thing not to be quite imagined by one who has never seen it before. It ought to be very hard for any man to be pagan to-day; surely the dullest and most sensual of us must take off his hat and walk softly as in the very presence of God. Bliss Carman speaks of the call of October to the gypsy blood that is in us, and many of us acknowledge that strange thrill and stir that comes to us; but surely there is a call to something else as well, a call to come with bowed hearts as to some altar of God, upon which we would lay our offering of praise and gratitude that He has filled the earth with such rare beauty and charm, and then given us the eyes and the heart to see it all. It ought to be easy to understand to-day that life was not meant merely for sordid things, that beauty and joy and richness were all a part of the great divine plan and scheme of things; it ought to be easy to-day to rejoice and be glad in the glory of the Lord, a glory that is quite past all our imitating but not, thank God, beyond our powers of appreciation and enjoyment.

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The summer long, the tall trees prayed  
In all the speech they knew,  
Uplifting tremulous hands of green  
To Heaven's eternal blue.

God heard, and on the waiting wood  
His sudden glory came.  
The trees in buff and crimson stood  
And spoke with tongues of flame.

—CLARIBEL WEEKS AVERY



*How much owest thou unto my Lord?*

—*Luke 16: 5*

## ARE YOU DOING YOUR SHARE?

**A**RE you doing your share at making the world better? That is a straightforward, personal question and each man and woman of us ought to try and give it an honest answer. Suppose no one else were doing any more than we are, what would be the chances of the millenium dawning one of these bright mornings? If every other man's light were no brighter than ours, when would it be likely that the Day of the Lord would flood this old earth with the glory of its dawning? If every other Christian had as many unchristly characteristics as we have, and was as indifferent and half-hearted as we about really living the Gospel of Christ among men, would that Gospel ever stand a chance of redeeming the world of mankind from all that spoils and saddens and destroys it? These may not be easy questions to answer with exactness, but if we honestly ask them perhaps some answer will suggest itself that will set us thinking. And, honestly, ought we not to face up to just such questions as that? And if you ask me to-day why we should I have a dozen good reasons to give, but I do not think you need them, for you know as well as I. If we will only ask the questions in seriousness we will hardly be able to escape the answer.

---

Who bids us sing? What need has the world for song,  
What need of the spring, when autumn is harsh and strong?

The winter comes, the winter drear,

The year is dead, the marvellous fruitful year!

Who bids us sing? What need has the world for song?

What need? Under the earth the blossoms hide  
Through all the cold of the winter-tide;

Who shall waken them, who shall call

When the first sweet days of the springtime fall?

Who else? Under the earth the blossoms hide.

—RHYS CARPENTER

*Thou hast put gladness in my heart.*

—*Psalm 4: 7*

## KEEPING SUMMER IN THE HEART

11/10/25' I READ a little bit of verse last week in which the author breathed a great sigh of regret that we were not able in some magic way to hold back the hand of winter, and keep the warmth and sunshine and brightness of the summer with us for a few months longer. My first feeling was one of sympathy with the sentiment, for I do love the dear ways of summer, but then it came to me that this thing that the poet wished to have done is not, after all, so utterly impossible. I am not sure that I can do it through all the hard months of the winter time, but I know that it is possible to keep summer in the heart always and to enjoy every day in the presence of real sunshine and glow and warmth in the soul. And I know, too, that if one can do that, the mere weather outside does not matter much. And so I have decided that I am not going to waste much breath sighing over the summer that I cannot keep, for I am going to be busy enjoying the one that cannot be taken from me, and helping other folks to enjoy it too. And I believe if I can succeed in that it will be infinitely better than seeking relief by hurrying away to any sunny southland to catch up with the summer that has gone. The summer that stays in a man's heart is glorious and splendid above all imagining. And the warmth and sunshine and geniality and abounding joy of it no man can take away from us unless we foolishly and wickedly allow him so to do.

From the prison of anxious thoughts that greed has builded,  
 From the fetters that envy has wrought, and pride has gilded,  
 From the noise of the crowded ways and the fierce confusion,  
 From the folly that wastes its days in a world of illusion  
 (Ah, but life is lost that frets and languishes there),  
 I would escape and be free in the joy of the open air!

—HENRY VAN DYKE

*To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.*

—Revelation 2: 7

11/10/18

## THE VICTORY OF DEFEAT

**I**T IS a great thing never to know when you are beaten. To see one bravely smiling when everything is against him and there is not left one single thing to smile about, is a sight to gladden the heart of God. That men and women have done it, that they are able to do it, surely shows a triumph of spiritual forces in this life of ours that is heartening past all computation. To bear one's burden without any hint of complaint, that is good, but to bear it as if there were really joy in it, that is better, that is triumphant. To keep on one's way against leagued antagonisms, without any thought of giving in, or turning back, is a great achievement, but to cheer the way of our going with song, as if, indeed, it were some primrose path, that is the infinitely great achievement. When we see men and women doing that—and we do see them doing it—we feel like taking off our hat and walking softly as if in the presence of some sacred, holy thing. It somehow gives us a vision of the greatness, the divineness of human nature. And it does this, too: it gives us some little glimpse at the meaning of the hard and testing and difficult things that face us so often in this life of ours. It were worth while that such fruit should be produced, even at great cost.

He sang of joy; whate'er he knew of sadness  
 He kept for his own heart's peculiar share;  
 So well he sang, the world imagined gladness  
 To be sole tenant there.

For dreams were his, and in the dawn's fair shining,  
 His spirit soared beyond the mounting lark;  
 But from his lips no accent of repining  
 Fell when the days grew dark;

And though contending long dread Fate to master  
 He failed at last her enmity to cheat,  
 He turned with such a smile before disaster  
 That he sublimed defeat.

—FLORENCE EARLE COATES

*My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him.*

—*Psalm 62: 5*

## EXPECTING GREAT THINGS

OF ALL the poor, make-believe modern beatitudes, one of the very poorest is "Blessed is he who does not expect much." When a man gets to the place where great expectations and wonderful hopes have died out of his life, he is old and practically worthless, no matter what his years. He might about as well be laid to his long rest so far as the possibility of any real achievement in his life is concerned. Of course I know that great expectations are sometimes doomed to disappointment, but after all disappointments are not always tragedies. And then the joy of hoping is very real, and nothing can take that away from us if we have, as we ought to have, well cultivated the habit. The man who expects much has the gladness and exhilaration of that expectation, but the man who doesn't has nothing. Isn't it true, in the final analysis, that life fails us, and is a disappointment to us, much more because we do not expect enough of it, and plan and hope for big enough things, than because our great expectations have failed us? Really great expectations in themselves do much to make life great and satisfying. And without them great achievement is never possible. If like the psalmist of old, our expectation is from God, then surely we must be expecting great things.

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Great god whom I shall carve from this gray stone  
 Wherein thou liest, hid to all but me,  
 Grant thou that when my art hath made thee known  
 And others bow, I shall not worship thee.  
 But as I pray thee now, then let me pray  
 Some greater God—like thee to be conceived  
 Within my soul—for strength to turn away  
 From his new altar, when, that task achieved,  
 He, too, stands manifest. Yea let me yearn  
 From dream to grander dream! Let me not rest  
 Content at my goal! Still bid me spurn  
 Each transient triumph on the Eternal Quest.

—ARTHUR GUITERMAN

*The Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's.*  
 —1 Samuel 17: 47

## THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S

THE story of the slaying of the big Philistine by Jesse's shepherd son still makes good reading. It is wonderfully up-to-date, and fits our day as well as it did any other. It reminds us of the truth that we often sadly need to be reminded of, namely, that the battle is the Lord's. And that truth reduced to its every-day terms means this, that moral and spiritual forces count for more in life's real conflicts and struggles than do merely material forces. We all know that to be true, but how often we forget it, or let slip its tremendous significance. The sentiments and convictions of the people are mightier things in a nation's life than battleships and machine guns. Ideals are a truer defence than fortification and concrete foundations. No sword that ever was tempered can do one thousandth part as much to change and mould history as can some single idea. Yes, the battle is the Lord's, and He doesn't save alone by sword and spear. Brute strength in any form cannot stand for a moment against the weapons that He ordains and uses. This is the victory—even our faith. Do you believe it? You say "Yes," of course, when the question is put to you, but do you live "Yes" in the thick of life's problems and difficulties and fierce conflicts? Pious professing is sometimes easy, but here is surely a faith that was meant to be lived up to. But, my! it surely is a great and testing and difficult faith to live up to.

Stronger than steel  
 Is the sword of the Spirit;  
 Swifter than arrows,  
 The light of the truth is,  
 Greater than anger  
 Is love, and subdueth.

—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW



*I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.*

—Romans 1: 14

## PAYING OUR DEBTS

ANY man who makes a pretense at being honest will try to pay for what he gets. But having admitted the justness of the claim that he do so, he may be surprised at the wideness of the application of the principle that lies back of it. The earth pays for what it gets—the rain and the sunshine, and the breezes of heaven—with fruitfulness, waving grain, buds and blossoms and fruits, and the smiling green of fields. It isn't a mere sponge, receiving always and never responding to the giver. It gives back everything with an added something of its own. The earth is honest. And a man ought not to be any less so. He is getting every day and hour and moment of his life, getting from all sides and in all possible ways. From the God who rules his life, down to the little child who meets him on the street, everyone gives him something. If he is going to be as honest as the earth is, he will have to be busy all the time paying his debts, giving back what he gets so freely and generously to every one he can, and in all ways that he can. If he doesn't, he is something of a sponge, instead of a man. This thing of paying one's debts is indeed no small or easy matter, is it?

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When Time lays grief beside your door  
'Tis not to you alone he bears it;  
There is no friend of all your store  
But stands beside you close, and shares it.

So, when grief comes to one you know,  
Then let him feel another fighter  
Beside him fights too, blow on blow  
Lift! till he feels his load grow lighter.

Together we can bear all loads,  
Together new worlds build and rear,  
So, say to one who feels Life's goads;  
"You're not alone. I'm here!"

—MARY CAROLYN DAVIES



*If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good*  
*—Romans 7: 16*

## ON GOOD TERMS WITH HIMSELF

A MAN ought to be able to live on good terms with himself. For one thing he lives with himself a great deal more than he lives with anyone else. If he is not really enjoying his own company it is rather a sad and sorrowful outlook. What is the matter when a man isn't on good terms with himself? Why is it that the things that he himself does and the thing that he himself is displeased and dissatisfied with? The only answer is that it is not always the self that does and is that passes judgment upon what has been done and achieved. For that reason it is not an altogether good sign when a man is very well pleased with himself. But while a man should not always be on the point of moving a complimentary resolution to himself, he should be able to bring himself into such harmony that the business of his life could be carried on on a peace footing. The thing which his best self commends must not be too far ahead of the thing which his other self allows and does, if his life is to be in any way consistently harmonious and happy. There is a way of attempting to bring about this needed harmony that some folk try that I would not commend, that is the way of insisting that the better self have little to say about things. That way as a matter of fact does not work very well.

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Great God! I ask Thee for no meaner self  
 Than that I may not disappoint myself;  
 That in my conduct I may soar as high  
 As I can now discern with this clear eye;  
 That my weak hand may equal my firm faith,  
 And my life practice more than my tongue saith;  
 That my low conduct may not show,  
 Nor my relenting lines,  
 That I thy purpose did not know,  
 Or overrated thy designs.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU

*Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*

—1 Corinthians 15: 58

## BE YE STEADFAST, UNMOVABLE

THERE is such a thing as genius, and without it the world would be almost infinitely poorer than it is, and yet it is well to remember that it has not so many things to its credit as we often imagine. There have been very many men and women who have great achievements to their credit who had nothing unusual about them save their ability to stay steadfastly with the things that they undertook. They did not think very differently from other people, they had no special or unusual equipment, their faith and philosophy of life were not in any way out of the ordinary, but they had the knack of living up to their best and staying consistently with their own programme, and it was that that accounted largely for what they were able to do. Abraham Lincoln was a man of ordinary human qualities, and in no sense a great genius, but he had that quality of steadfastness to a wonderful degree, and he was able to keep on believing when others had lost faith, and to keep on doing when others' hands had fallen slack. There was nothing of the magic quality to his life, but he had acquired a great gift for not going back on himself, or of faltering in the great tasks and policies that he had once set down. Others might be frightened, or filled with misgiving, but he simply would not let anything turn him aside. And it was that which made the way of victory for him.

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No one, I say, is conquered till he yields;  
And yield he need not, while, like mist from glass,  
God wipes the stain of life-old battlefields  
From every morning that He brings to pass.

New day, new hope, new courage! Let this be,  
O Soul, thy cheerful creed! What's Yesterday,  
With all its shards and wrack and grief, to thee?  
Forget it, then—here lies the victor's way.

—JAMES BUCKHAM

*And to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even.*

—1 Chronicles 23: 30

11/10/25

## THE THANKSGIVING HABIT

NO MATTER what the poets and pessimists have said through all the centuries of the world's history there is, after all, a very great deal of real and heartfelt gratitude in the world. One of the difficulties is that it does not get the expression that it ought to have. It does seem to be surprisingly difficult for many of us to say "thank you" in any very hearty and outspoken way, and especially for the so-called little and commonplace things of every day, the things that are, after all, most worth being grateful for. This morning as I write the whole earth is filled with the wonderful glory of the October sunshine, and it is impossible that any one should see and feel it and not be glad and grateful, but it is so easily possible to forget to look up and express gladness and gratitude in the face of Him through whom it all exists. Is it not true that there is nothing that comes to us in life that brings joy and satisfaction and happiness but what some one, somewhere, ought to be thanked for it? And if that be true then gratitude ought to be a much more active grace with us than it is. Besides feeling grateful we ought to cultivate the thanksgiving habit, and that habit will probably multiply our gratitude many fold. I wonder if that standing night and morning to praise the Lord is not a very good idea.

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Whatever gifts and mercies to my lot may fall,

I would not measure

As worth a certain price in praise, or great or small;

But take and use them all with simple pleasure.

For when we gladly eat our daily bread, we bless

The Hand that feeds us;

And when we tread the road of life in cheerfulness,

Our very heart-beats praise the Love that leads us.

—HENRY VAN DYKE

*Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.*

—*Psalm 62: 1*

## PUTTING IT TO THE TEST

2/10/25  
**W**HATEVER opinions one might hold relative to the specific value of prayer, he would be a very heathen and infidel, indeed, who would not allow that it would be a good and a helpful thing, in times of perplexity and peril like these, to confess human short-sightedness and possibility to err, and to lift at least a questioning eye to a possible source of more-than-human wisdom and leading. Prayer in that very initial and nebulous way could scarcely seem unreasonable to any intelligent man. But let any man begin honestly to pray, even after that fashion, and he has started on a way that ends in a positive and assured faith in an infinite and good God who can and does help those who come to Him. Prayer is a thing that a man comes to believe in more and more because he does it, and history has no record of men who were sceptical of prayer who kept on praying. The answer to one claiming disbelief in prayer is not a reasoned argument in its favor, but rather an invitation to pray. Praying will do what no argument could possibly do. Indeed I have in my mind a hundred arguments against prayer, but I have no convincing argument at all against that fact that I have prayed, and I *have* found it to be a source of infinite blessing and strength and uplift. My word for it, if you will pray you will have an irresistible argument against the one who says there is nothing in it.

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I know not by what method rare,  
 But this I know, God answers prayer.  
 I know that He has given His word,  
 Which tells me prayer is always heard,  
 And will be answered soon or late,  
 And so I pray and calmly wait.  
 Assured that He will grant my quest  
 Or send some answer far more blest.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sitteth in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

—Deuteronomy 6:

## CHILDREN AND BOOKS

ONE of the very best things that any parent can do for his child is to give him an appetite for the reading of good books. Having done that he has put him in the way of much happiness and satisfaction, and has as well made things possible in his life that otherwise would have been impossible. Good books are a gateway of opportunity into some of the best things that life has to offer, and happy indeed is that person who has been wisely and early trained to see that gateway and to open it for himself. We owe our children good health, a training for life and its duties, a scope and place in which to make good in the midst of its great activities, but if we have not added to all that by cultivating in them a taste and appreciation for books, we have left a very large and a very important part of our obligation to them unfulfilled. Our failure to do this will shut them out of a world that was intended for them, a world that is gloriously rich in the best things that the human imagination and brain have produced. And this is one of the most serious crimes against them that we can be guilty of. That great world of literature is their priceless heritage, but apart from our guidance and helpful direction, they may never come to appreciate or understand or enter into it. There are not many things we can give them that will mean so much to their whole life as that taste for good books. We must surely give them that. And if we do they will thank us for it to the longest day of their life.

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Books, we know,  
Are a substantial world, both pure and good;  
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,  
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.

—WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



*If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.*

—Job 36: 11

## THE PEACE OF OBEDIENCE

ONE of the great preachers of the last generation magnified and glorified what he called the peace of obedience. His idea was that when a man had his mind made up and his destiny before him, and was in the place that God had appointed to him, willingly and joyfully accepting the duties and obligations that came, he might expect a great joy and rest and quietness of spirit. It didn't make any difference whether life was hard or easy, if it carried with it that feeling and sense of obedience to duty and destiny, it had in it the elements of real joy and satisfaction. But if, on the other hand, it wanted that feeling and conviction, it wanted something that nothing else could atone for. And what man is there among us who has lived at all who cannot gladly testify to the soundness of such philosophy. The things in life that have brought us real happiness and satisfaction have not been merely pleasant or profitable things, but rather the things, hard or easy, comfortable or otherwise, that lay right along the pathway of duty and the will of God. Of course it is not to be implied that the way of duty must always be some hard and bitter road. It may not be that at all. But if it be, have we not all found that it is still a good and kindly and very satisfying way.

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Not once or twice in our fair island story  
The path of duty was the way to glory.  
He, that ever following her commands,  
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,  
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won  
His path upward, and prevailed,  
Shall find the toppling crags of duty scaled  
Are close upon the shining table-lands  
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.

—LORD TENNYSON



*I cried unto thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion  
in the land of the living.*

—Psalm 142: 5

## HARD TO DO WITHOUT IT

16/10/25

A MAN needs religion as he needs sunshine and fresh air and good food, and for somewhat similar reasons. He cannot be sound, and sane, and wholesome, and healthy without the one any more than he can without the other. The man to whom the Gospel means nothing tends to become a one-sided, unhealthy, ill-formed man. He has left something out of his life that sadly mars, and limits, and weakens it. He may not be a very bad man, but the thing he has left out lowers his ideals, narrows his outlook, perverts his ambitions, spoils his happiness, and injures his real usefulness. It may not do all or any of these things completely, but it certainly does tend to do them all. Neither in ideals, nor vision, nor ambition, nor satisfaction, nor helpfulness is he the man he would be if religion was the big and vital thing in his life. Religion is a tonic, an inspiration, a stimulus, a bracer for life's duties, a solace for its cares and trials, a steadying power all along its uneven way that he will find it very hard and difficult and trying to do without. Of course you may answer me that you have seen religion working in the lives of some people and it has not been all this to them, but I still insist I am right. Religion has been all this to some, and it may and ought to be all this to every one to whom it is a reality.

Hill people turn to their hills;  
Sea-folk are sick for the sea;  
Thou art my land and my country,  
And my heart calls out for thee.

The bird beats his wings for the open;  
The captive burns to be free;  
But I—I cry at thy window,  
For thou art my liberty.

—FLORENCE WILKINSON

*To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven.*

—Ecclesiastes 3: 1

## THE TIMELINESS OF GOOD CHEER

10/17/25  
IN ELABORATING his philosophy of the eternal fitness of things the preacher in that strange Book of Ecclesiastes shows himself the true pessimist. There is a time to weep and a time to laugh, he reminds us, but after all what difference does it make which we have the most of? If we have great joy it will be followed by great sorrow, and what profit is there in it all. But is there not an infinitely more wholesome philosophy? It is true in all our lives that sorrow follows after joy, and that the time of weeping crowds hard upon the time of laughter. It is true that saddening and bitter experiences come to all, but it does not follow that a man has to yield himself up to the experience of the moment, or that he has no resource against the sorrow that would darken his life. Of course, tears will come, but one may smile through his tears, and at once the whole horizon of his life is spanned by the bright rainbow of promise. Of course, loss will come, but if one will look around, it is seldom that he will not find that loss has brought in her hand a gain of which he had not dreamed. And so, in regard to the whole circle of life, instead of a man being a creature of circumstance, accepting in a blind and helpless sort of way the bitter and the sweet, he has within himself, as a divine gift, the power to make the bitter into sweet, to turn the sadness into a great and an abiding joy.

Sit down, sad soul, and count  
The moments flying:  
Come,—tell the sweet amount  
That's lost by sighing!  
How many smiles?—a score?  
Then laugh, and count no more;  
For day is dying!

We dream: do thou the same:  
We love—forever:  
We laugh; yet few we shame,  
The gentle, never.  
Stay then till sorrow dies;  
Then—hope and happy skies  
Are thine forever.

—BRYAN WALLER PROCTER

*I will make darkness light before them.*

—Isaiah 42: 16

## A TIME FOR FAITH

THE light shineth in darkness. Of course; where else could it bear such convincing and cheering witness of itself? And its testimony is just what the darkness needs. A man's faith in God and in the goodness at the heart of things is meant for a dark and bitter and testing day. That day is upon us now, and the question to ask ourselves is, does our confidence and our trust measure up to the tremendous occasion? Can we believe in the glory and the good that we cannot for the time see, and can we trust, unflinchingly and triumphantly, in the God who seems at the moment to have left the world alone to reap the bitter harvest of its sin and folly? If we cannot, and do not, we are bearing false witness to our faith, and we are snuffing out the light that God has given to us with which to brighten and to cheer the world. Truly this is a great day in which to talk about the golden age to be, and the glory to be revealed! Can you do it? There have been other days just as dark and ominous as this one and men held to their faith through them, and in the end found that faith to rest down upon solid foundations. We oughtn't to let them outmatch us in courage or vision or unconquered faith.

The world's great age begins anew,  
The golden years return,  
The world doth like a snake renew  
Her winter weeds outworn:  
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,  
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains  
From waves serener far;  
A new Peneus rolls his fountains  
Against the morning star.  
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep  
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

—PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

*Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. —Hebrews 12: 1*

## STOPPING THE PROCESSION

THE fact that the little we can do to make the world better is small indeed is often our excuse for doing nothing, but it is a very poor excuse. In reality it should be the very reason why we should do our little, and do it up to the limit of our best possible. The world is not made better all at once and by the big achievements of one or two; it is a slow process, and the little goodnesses of a multitude of people combine to make it possible. If it came easily and suddenly and through individual effort we might shoulder our responsibility on some one else, but when it is such a slow business, at which a multitude must work, then to neglect our part is a sin and a crime. Because it is so little that the best of us can do it is all the more important that the little be done after the best fashion lest the whole process, so slow and laborious at best, shall stay and linger for the want of us. The fact that our day of achievement is likely to be small is all the more reason that we should try to make it the biggest we can. If our best is poor surely there is no excuse for a second best. If our long day of faithful service seem to yield but small return, what argument can we put up for scamped, half-time work. If progress at best is a slow, uphill climb there surely can be no justification for long resting by the way. We cannot hope at all to make up on neglect or indifference or poorly done work, so that the only way left us to make our short day count is to put something like our best into its every hour.

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Let no man think that sudden in a minute  
All is accomplished and the work is done;—  
Though with thine earliest dawn thou should'st begin it,  
Scarce were it ended in thy setting sun.

—F. W. H. MYERS

*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*  
—2 Corinthians 4: 18

## THE THINGS WE CANNOT SEE

20/10/25

OUR whole aspect of life and the purpose and ideal in everything we do and say and think will be moulded and governed by our faith or lack of faith in these unseen things. There is far more in life than we can see or handle or measure. That was Christ's teaching; indeed it is a teaching that we find written large on almost every page of God's Book. There is no great effort made to prove that it is so; it is taken magnificently for granted, though we do get many illustrations of what happens to men when they come to a vivid realization of their unseen spiritual environment. Jacob at Bethel saw earth and heaven joined, and Elisha's servant at Dothan saw the chariots and horsemen of Jehovah all about him. When a man comes to see the unseen spiritual forces and environments of life everything takes on a new meaning, and living becomes a great and splendid opportunity. These things that endure—they are the things that give stability and beauty and meaning to all of life! If we would go out into life every morning with a fresh vision of them—what might we not do and what might not life become with us! I am sure that it is just that vision that we all need.

---

A certain Pasha, dead five thousand years,  
Once from his harem fled in sudden tears,

And had this sentence on the city's gate  
Deeply engraven, "Only God is great."

Lost is the city's glory. Every gust  
Lifts, with dead leaves, the unknown Pasha's dust,

And all is ruin,—save one wrinkled gate  
Whereon is written, "Only God is great."

—THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH



*Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire . . . waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*

—Hebrews 11: 33, 34

## NOT A SPECTACLE

20/10/25

SOME great man, whose name has slipped me, reminded the world once upon a time that life was not a spectacle but a battle-field. The distinction is a significant one. It makes a vital difference, surely, whether one sees life as a passing show to be looked at and enjoyed, or as a struggle into which he must himself enter and to which he must give of the best that is in him. The former view makes living an empty-headed, empty-hearted thing indeed, while the latter gives it value and purpose and dignity. It is true that a battle-field does not suggest ease and comfort and safety, but in heaven's name why should a man with red blood in his veins think too fondly or too seriously of such things, and especially in a day like ours? And what that day needs more than it needs anything else is a goodly and growing company of men and women who are ready continually to forget their own narrow interest, to thrust themselves out where the fight is strong, and to lead that life whose symbol is a Cross, whose Guide and Inspiration is the Christ of Calvary. My, if we could throw ourselves into living as Jesus did, would we not make it wonderfully worth while!

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We seek the City of God, and the haunt where beauty dwells,  
And we find the noisy mart and the sound of burial bells.

We travel the dusty road till the light of the day is dim,  
And sunset shows us spires away on the world's rim.

We travel from dawn till dusk, till the day is past and by,  
Seeking the Holy City beyond the rim of the sky.

Friends and loves we have none, nor wealth, nor blest abode,  
But the hope, the burning hope, and the road, the lonely road.

—JOHN MASEFIELD



*And the greatest of these is love.*

—1 Corinthians 13: 13

## THE THINGS THAT COUNT

21/10/25

WHO is to say which ones they are? We call some deeds little and others big; we put some in the list of specially worthy, while others seem to us very insignificant and commonplace, and yet we know all the time that we are doing it that our standards of measure and appraisal are hardly just and satisfactory. The act that makes the immediately fine, big impression is apt to count for more with all of us than it deserves to, while the thing that looks small only because its virtue and vitality are not out in the open is often judged of little import. And yet the things that live and mould history and shape destiny are often in the latter class. The man who gives an idea to the world is frequently forgotten and neglected, but it is he of all men who counts in the life of the race, though oftener than not he knows nothing of it. Sometimes it is very difficult to say what deeds will count greatly in history, but this we can be sure of, that no deed finely done, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem, will be without its influence somewhere and at some time. And that is the difficulty with many of us, to keep on finely doing the things that do not seem at all big and important. But in the final analysis the lives of most of us will count only as we succeed in doing that. Most of us are not given many big and important things to do, as a matter of fact, but there never was a task so small that it was not worth doing well.

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Ideals make life, not fame nor gold;  
 And love sings low with fragrant breath;  
 All else but soul and love grow old;  
 But soul and love bewilder death!

Give love to life; give love to man.  
 Give love to truth's eternal call.  
 The hasting world may go its span,  
 But soul and love shall vanquish all!

—FREDERICK HONK LAW

*Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

—Ephesians 5: 20

## THE GRACE OF GRATITUDE

27/10/2 -  
**G**RATITUDE comes very near to being the crowning emotion of the soul, and he who has learned the habit of it has learned the way to the greatest fullness and rapture of life. The grateful soul may not be the one to whom life has dealt most bountifully and beneficently, but it is all one as if it were, for the fullness of the heart makes up for any lack. He who has gratitude is as if he had the best that a thousand worlds had to offer, for his gratefulness multiplies and magnifies his blessing a million-fold; while he who has not gratitude is poor and miserable and unhappy with a universe at his feet. It isn't what we have but how we appreciate what we have that makes life either full or empty, either joyous or futile. There isn't a life that has ever been lived that hasn't felt rich and full and abounding in the hour of some fine gratitude, and there never was a man so poor and bereft that his soul didn't seem crowned with blessings when he looked up into the face of God and tried to express his thankfulness. The joy and richness that come through gratefulness are no mocking, make-believe things at all; they are among the most real and abiding possessions of life. And just as we learn that great lesson of gratitude, and yield ourselves to the throb of that finest emotion of the soul, will life take on a steadfast joy and glory and fullness.

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No cause for thanks? Have you no friend  
 Upon whose word you can depend?

Is there no person, far or near,  
 By whom your face is held most dear?

Have you no sun, no heaven of blue,  
 Forever smiling down on you?

Such gifts as these—did they ne'er bless?  
 Then you've no cause for thankfulness!

—IDA M. THOMAS

*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.*

—*Ecclesiastes 9: 10*

## GIVING ONE'S BEST

**E**VEN though many of us have to admit that our gifts to the world have not been very magnificent or splendid, we ought to take some comfort to ourselves if the things we have done bear anything like a reasonable and fair relationship to the things that it was in us to do. To be able to say that we have done somewhere near to our best may not be to make any great claim for our actual performance, but it is a great and a fairly satisfying claim to be able to make just the same. But where we fail of our best usually is not in failing to do some fine thing that lies just a little bit beyond or ahead of us, but in failing to do finely the things we can do and are doing every day. To put our best work and our best thought into every day's undertaking is about the only way open to most of us of giving our best to the world; for the opportunity of doing the great and splendid thing of which we occasionally dream may never come at all, and it might not prove to be the great opportunity we picture it if it did come. For after all the world is in far greater need of having the commonplace and ordinary things of life finely done than it is of having those fine spectacular things which we all think of doing at times. And what man of us cannot give his best to each day's tasks as they come! And no opportunity will ever be finer than that.

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"No gift of leadership?" Well, plow your field,  
 Or strike your anvil worthily. A man  
 Needs not the first place in the Vatican  
 To make him great. Why not be *one* to wield  
 A hammer for the forging of a shield  
 That on *some* strong man's arm may break a plan  
 To give to Wrong advantage? Say "I can"  
 E'en to the humblest task, and share its yield.  
 One may be leading when he knows it not.

—WILLIAM NORRIS BURR

*And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*

—Luke 12: 15

## BUYING AN AUTO

27.4.15  
IF YOU cannot afford an automobile you ought to be genuinely content to get along without it. The worst thing in all the world for you to do is to look every morning at your neighbor as he drives off with his, and wish and wish and wish that you had the mate to it. Envy is about one of the most foolish follies that any man can be guilty of. And it is such a mean and ungrateful vice too. Before you really begin to envy your neighbor you do two unwise and wrong things. You minify and cheapen and forget about your own blessings, and you also magnify and enlarge and distort his, forgetting all the while some of the disadvantages that go along with them. He has the automobile, but my! he has some other things that you wouldn't be burdened and troubled with for the world. And then you have some things that he has not that you wouldn't give up for an entire automobile factory. Don't let that automobile spoil and tarnish all the fair and fine things you have and turn all your May into November. You would probably enjoy having one like it, but really you can get along without it and have a very happy and cheerful time of it too. And somehow if you grow a covetous heart all the automobiles in the world will never make you happy. And one sure way of growing a covetous heart is to keep on looking with envious eyes at your neighbor's car. Get your eyes off the things you haven't, and train them more carefully to see and appreciate the things you have.

---

Oh, sweet content, that turns the laborer's sweat  
To tears of joy, and shines the roughest face;  
How often have I sought you high and low,  
And found you still in some lone quiet place.

—W. H. DAVIES

*My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.*

—Psalm 73: 26

## A STOUT HEART

THERE is a French proverb which says, "One can go a long way after one is weary." The gallant French nation is itself pathetically proving the truthfulness of the saying. And so are the English-speaking peoples; and they will prove it more and more as the months and the years come and go. And if, for the time being, they haven't a better one, that is indeed a very good motto to go by. If one cannot go along the road with a lilt and a song; if somehow the joy and the spring have gone out of things, at least one can keep going on, and can find a very real satisfaction in the fact that he can do so, and that a hard and a rough way has not been able to discourage him or turn him aside. Of course a smile on a man's face is good to see, but the man who cannot always keep one there these days, and who finds the admonition to "cheer up" just a little beyond him, may comfort himself with the fact that he can, even with a set, stern face, keep helpfully and hopefully going on. And as long as he can keep a stout heart he is master of the situation, no matter how difficult it may become. And a stout heart and a grim face are just about sure to lead on to some good goal and destiny. After a while smiles come to grim faces, and such smiles are indeed good to see, and the man with the stout heart richly deserves to be visited by them.

This is the word that year by year  
 While in her place the school is set,  
 Every one of her sons must hear,  
 And none that hear it dare forget.  
 This they all with a joyful mind  
 Bear through life like a torch of flame,  
 And falling fling to the host behind—  
 "Play up! play up! and play the game!"

—HENRY NEWBOLT



*For with God nothing shall be impossible.*

—Luke 1: 37

## DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE

THE day of miracles is not past. The impossible is being done every day in the week. A contemporary tells the old yet still amusing story of the hard chase of a woodchuck. Pressed sorely by dogs, and cut off in his retreat at every point, at last the animal was said to have climbed a tree to escape. A farmer-boy, listening to the story, interposed with the statement that a woodchuck could not climb a tree. "Aye," said the narrator "I know a woodchuck cannot climb a tree, but this one had to." Normally and in the ordinary there are a great many things we cannot do, but we can do them just the same. Necessity takes us out of the normal and the ordinary sometimes to that place where the common laws and limitations do not bind and hinder. Yes, we have all done the impossible many times. And there is no necessity like a moral necessity. We cannot do a thing until God's great *ought* reaches and grips us, and then we arise and do it. When the divine necessity is on a man he is something more than a man, and it is easy to do the impossible when a man is a man plus God. Don't you believe that? Well, I am sorry for you if you do not. There has been a great multitude of people who have proved it over and over and over again.

That overnight a rose could come  
 I one time did believe,  
 For when the fairies live with one,  
 They wilfully deceive.  
 But now I know this perfect thing  
 Under the frozen sod  
 In cold and storm grew patiently,  
 Obedient to God.

My wonder grows, since knowl-  
 edge came  
 Old fairies to dismiss;  
 And courage comes. Was not  
 the rose  
 A winter doing this?  
 Nor did it know, the weary while,  
 What color and perfume  
 With this completed loveliness  
 Lay in that earthly tomb.

—CAROLINE GILTINAN



*He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*

—John 1: 10

## THEY KNEW HIM NOT

WHO that has read the Gospel story has not found himself many times moved to pity by the picture given therein of the men and women of Galilee and Jerusalem who almost rubbed clothes with the Man of Nazareth, who saw Him walking the crowded city streets, or resting on the hillside with His disciples, but who had no conception of who He was, or of how much He might have helped them and been to them. They were foolishly asking as to the signs of His coming, while all the time He was right in their midst, and they might have met Him at nearly any turn of the road and entered into a fellowship with Him that would have enriched and blessed their lives past all their imagining. And yet in what ways were these more to be pitied than are those people of to-day who are searching for signs of some wonderful Second Advent and are forgetting that this same Jesus lives in His world just as truly as He did so long ago, and that along any humble way of life any man may meet Him and know Him and be glad and strong. Talk about missing the good things of life—surely to miss Him is to miss life's very best! And the folly is all the greater because we miss Him through being interested and taken up with some things that are not of any really great moment.

---

“I come in the little things,” saith the Lord,

“My starry wings I do forsake,  
Love's highway of humility to take,  
Meekly I fit my stature to your need.

In beggar's part  
About your gates I shall not cease to plead,  
As man to speak to man,

Till by such art,  
I shall achieve my immemorial plan,  
Pass the low lintel of the human heart.”

—RICHARD WATSON GILDER

*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared.* —1 Corinthians 2: 9

31/10/25

## TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

ISN'T there a good deal of paganism in our frequent use of that old phrase? Back of our words there must be at least a half conviction that this is a sort of devil-cursed world in which really good things do not happen very often, and are scarcely to be looked for in the programme. But if the majority of us would only look back carefully over our lives and see how many good things after all have happened to us we should probably be compelled to put the matter in just the opposite way. Not very many things are too good to be true, in fact it is just because they are so good that they are very likely to be true, if not to-day, then to-morrow. And to preach the doctrine that there is a perversity in life, and an ill-spirited fate at the heart of things that holds a special grudge against the pleasant climaxes and happy eventuations of life is to be unfair to life and unjust to its Author and Upholder. The greatest libel we can be guilty of is to judge God the foe of happiness, or to say that there is anything in this world too good to be true. In so far as many of those good things haven't yet come we must place the blame somewhere else than on Him.

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Life has loveliness to sell—

All beautiful and splendid things,  
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,  
Climbing fire that sways and sings,  
And children's faces looking up  
Holding wonder like a cup.

Life has loveliness to sell—

Music like a curve of gold,  
Scent of pine trees in the rain,  
Eyes that love you, arms that hold,  
And for your spirit's still delight,  
Holy thoughts that star the night.

—SARA TEASDALE

*Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

—Romans 15: 1

## OUR DEBT

31/10/25

"**N**OW we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." But why should we? Paul is very sure that we should, but where does he get his argument? If I have the strength of natural gift, or individual advantage, or social opportunity, haven't I a perfect right to use it for myself? Isn't it mine? Didn't I do something to win it for myself? But Paul thunders out a most uncompromising answer to my questions. And the trouble is that he is just as logical as he is emphatic. When I plead that my strength is surely my own to use as I will, he says no, but he says it with this sentence that somehow I cannot get around, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" That convicts me, and I find no escape. The advantages of my life are gifts from some other people, or from circumstances that I did not create, or from the great God Himself, and when I look the matter squarely in the face it is difficult to see that I have sole and exclusive right to them. Paul's argument that they ought to bear some relation to the common good puts me in a corner indeed. It may be a hard saying, but it seems to have the inescapable logic of the Christ teaching back of it. According to that teaching human life is tied up in one great bundle and you cannot break it apart if you would. And if you are Christian you will not try. Really now, isn't the one reason why we do try to break it apart the fact that we are so little like that Man of Nazareth.

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There is no Spring that Autumn has not known,  
 Nor any Autumn Spring has not divined,—  
 The odor of dead flowers on the wind  
 Shall but enrich a fairer blossoming,  
 And though they shiver from a breeze outblown,  
 The leaves of Autumn guard the buds of Spring.

—CORINNE ROOSEVELT ROBINSON

*And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother.*

—2 Samuel 20: 9

8/1/25

## A HEALTHY CHRISTIAN

A HEALTHY body is a blessing never to be lightly esteemed, but it is not to be compared with a healthy soul. It is worth remembering that our two words *healthy* and *holy* come from the same root, that root suggesting chiefly the idea of wholeness. A healthy soul, therefore, is a sound, whole soul. And a healthy Christian is a holy, that is, a whole Christian. And of course he is a wholesome Christian. The dictionary tells us that the word *wholesome* refers to that which has a tendency to produce health, and a healthy Christian, surely, is not only sound in himself, but he has, besides, a positive health-producing, salutary, salubrious quality. As a matter of fact a healthy Christian is one whose moral and spiritual soundness is likely to become contagious. People who live near him tend to *catch* that thing which is supremely characteristic of him; his whole community tends, more or less, to take on color of health and soundness and wholesomeness from what he is. It is surely worth while trying to have a healthy soul in a healthy body. So while we are very keen these days in planning for the healthy body, we must have our programmes, too, for growing healthy souls. That may be a more difficult and delicate programme to carry through, but I am sure it is at least equally important.

---

Not from the earth, or skies,  
Or seasons as they roll,  
Comes health and vigor to the frame,  
But from the living soul.

For He who formed our frame  
Made man a perfect whole,  
And made the body's health depend  
Upon the living Soul.

—JONES VERY

*Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.*

—Isaiah 30: 8

## READING GOOD BOOKS

31/10/25

**E**VEN when we reckon up all the evil that they may have done, it is still true that in the struggle of the human race up toward better things, books have played a very important part. When men first learned to put their thoughts down in permanent form for other men to read and ponder over, a great step forward in human history was taken. How vast the sum of that great record of men's thoughts, and imaginings, and convictions has grown to be in our day! How splendid in number and quality are the great books of our time! But books are for reading and study, and not merely to be put upon shelves. How great would be our neglect and folly if we were to let them lie there and miss the help, and uplift, and direction that they might bring to us. To get the habit of reading good books is indeed to walk along a way of life that has rest, and refreshment, and inspiration for the soul. To neglect good books is to refuse to enter into a most splendid human heritage.

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When days are mostly cloudy ones,  
And earth but little brightness lends,  
I still can be content, for I  
Have books for friends.

Though all the world should turn from me,  
Giving me sneers and scornful looks,  
I would not be companionless,  
While there are books.

Should sorrow's shadow fall on me,  
And fill my heart with grief and pain,  
For comfort I would seek my books,  
And not in vain.

They are a never-failing source  
Of cheer, their service never ends.  
In every need I turn to them—  
Books are my friends.

—IDA M. THOMAS





## NOVEMBER

*Who said November's face was grim?*

*Who said her voice was harsh and sad?*

*I heard her sing in wood-paths dim,*

*I met her on the shore, so glad,*

*So smiling, I could kiss her feet!*

*There never was a month so sweet.*

—LUCY LARCOM

1/11/25



1/11/15

*Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.*

—Psalm 31: 24

## A DAY OF HOPE

**A**GAIN and again and again we come back to it with a sense of infinite comfort and strengthening—the great God has not left men to welter their way as best they may through the hideous consequences of their own folly and sin. Even in this day of terrible tragedy this is not a God-forsaken world. If it were we might as well give up one time as another. A strong and purposeful and patient and infinitely tender hand is laid upon things, and the utter wreck and ruin of anything that is lastingly worth while in His eyes does not seem possible. He being what He is, and we being His creation, nay more, His children, the evil thing cannot eventually triumph among us; neither can the good thing be for ever destroyed. This is God's world and men are His sons, made in His image. Those are the great facts. And given those facts a man may confidently hope even in a day like this. The way of training and discipline may be a hard and testing one, but it is a way of life, not death. Winter may be on us in grim reality but summer is coming. And summer will be very good. I am sure that there are great things in store for the world. History has had its disappointments and tragedies, but the end of it all is not going to be some terrible anticlimax. That much we can be sure of as we try to turn this day of grief into a day of hope. If we are among those people of whom the old psalmist speaks, who really "hope in the Lord," that view of things is not only possible but quite inevitable.

---

Yet, though a sense of grief  
Comes with the falling leaf,  
And memory makes the summer doubly pleasant,  
In all my autumn dreams  
A future summer gleams,  
Passing the fairest glories of the present.

—GEORGE ARNOLD

*Therefore be not anxious concerning the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.*

—Matt. 6: 34

## THE LIMITS OF ANXIETY

3/11/25  
IN DAYS like these we instinctively feel that there must be some necessary human limitations put upon the Scripture injunction which tells us to live without anxiety. As parents and friends, as citizens, as men and women deeply concerned for the future good and welfare of the world, it is simply impossible that we should pass these tragic, crisis days in a spirit of care-free trust and unconcern, and it is unreasonable and inhuman to ask us so to do. We must put sane limits upon our interpretation of this Scripture. But we must, as well, put sane and Christian limits upon our anxiety. It is so easy for what we might think to be legitimate anxiety and concern to settle down into unchristian worry and care, that burden and crush our spirit and limit and spoil our usefulness. We cannot live our lives in these times as the birds live, without any thought or care of future days and their possibilities, but we can live them as Christian men and women ought, who believe in the providence and care of an all-loving and an all-wise God. To say that that is a very hard thing to do doesn't change the situation at all. It is a very Christian thing to do, and therefore it is possible. And it will probably make it considerably easier to remember how well the very human Jesus succeeded in doing it under conditions that were not any more favorable than those under which we live to-day.

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Cricket, chirping in the autumn twilight,

Little kinsman

I, like you, the unknown path must follow

Into darkness,—

One day into darkness.

Would I might, with your ecstatic buoyance,

Fare forth singing.

—CLINTON SCOLLARD

*In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

—Psalm 16: 11

## A LITTLE RELIGION WITH IT

3/11/25

THERE is hardly anything in the world but would be the better of having a little religion mixed with it. If you don't think so, then try it for yourself. See if it will not take the grind and the hardness out of business, and make it much more human and kindly and enjoyable, without perhaps making any serious inroads into dividends either. See if it will not give an added touch of satisfaction and good cheer and brightness to the home; it will not be the first time if it does. Try it in politics; it ought to make it much more downright and sincere, a consummation devoutly to be wished. Or make the supreme test of all—try it in that inner circle of your own heart and life. My word for it if it does not give breadth and vision to your own soul, and add a joy that was altogether lacking before. I do not know of any other way of getting these things that make life big and worth while and enjoyable than that way of taking God into it, and learning to see His great plans and purposes and ideals. And that, it seems to me, is not only the one way of reaching life's best, but it is as well a fairly easy and simple way. Life was intended to be lived in intimate relation to God and the things of the spirit, and when we deny it that relationship we deny that without which its best either of satisfaction or achievement is impossible.

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Father, Thy wonders do not singly stand,  
 Nor far removed where feet have seldom strayed;  
 Around us ever lies the enchanted land,  
 In marvels rich to Thine own sons displayed.  
 In finding Thee are all things round us found  
 And losing Thee are all things lost beside.

—JONES VERY

*And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve.*

—Joshua 24: 15

## OUT IN THE OPEN

THESE are days which call men to declare themselves and challenge them to stand forth and tell the world openly by what sort of principles and ideals they intend to govern their lives. It ought not to be hard to-day for any man to let himself be counted upon the side of justice and brotherhood and high idealism. There has always been something very sordid and mean about the selfish and self-seeking life, but in the brighter and clearer light of this wonderful time it looks utterly contemptible and unworthy. If a man cannot to-day hear and heed the high voices that urge him to give himself without reserve to the task of making this a good world, and building among men the Kingdom of God, which is the Kingdom of righteousness and justice and fraternity, then surely the ears of his soul must be dull indeed, and his will bound down to the thing which is utterly of the earth. The voice that calls us to high living and noble service is very plain and pleading and insistent. We ought to heed it. Everything says that we ought. Evading the issue is cowardly; standing out selfishly for your own is very mean; temporizing is altogether unworthy. Why not stand right out in the open, committed up to the limit to all that is best and truest in life! I am sure that you will never find any satisfactory or convincing argument against such action as that.

---

I know that both are there, the battle set,  
And I must fight on this side or on that.  
I can't stand shivering on the bank, I plunge  
Head first. I bet my life on Beauty, Truth,  
And Love, not abstract but incarnate Truth,  
Not Beauty vague and distant, but Beauty's  
Very self made flesh and realized in Love.  
I bet my life on Christ, Christ crucified.

—G. A. STUDDERT KENNEDY



*That he might 'present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

—Ephesians 5: 27

## CALLED TO BE KNOCKERS

*11/25*

YES, the Church isn't any better than it ought to be. It has plenty of failings, there are some downright hypocrites in it, and a few other people who are not quite so good as they think they are. But the trouble is that the men who are most given to calling vociferous attention to the inconsistencies and short-comings of Church folks are not very gilt-edged themselves. This shouting out "hypocrite" to the churchgoer looks very much like a coward's trick to divert attention from the shouter. It is after all only the man who is an honest critic of himself who should be allowed the open right to criticize other folks. And if the majority of us keep our own back-door yard clean—well, we will not have so very much time to go nosing around other folks. And really when we think of it, the Church has kept going a good long time now, and that suggests something, at least. Indeed there are not many things that have lasted as well as it, and that stand up to criticism any better. By all means let us improve it. There is plenty of room for that, but let us not show our ignorance by calling it effete and hopeless.

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"Not till thou shalt be old," Christ said,  
"Shalt thou be bound as thou w'dst not!"

Thus lives Christ's Church, though fierce the foe,  
Still ever young, still gaining power,  
Running life's race course, each new hour  
Pulsing its veins red blood will flow;—  
Fresh truths it grasps,—progress it hails,—  
The forward look enchants it still,  
Weights off it throws,—its might prevails  
Eternal life to win,—and will!

Thus youth immortal crowns the brow  
Of Christ the King,—His Church the same.

—GEORGE C. PHIPPS

*But Jesus answered them, my Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*

—John 5: 17

## THE JOY OF WORK

HAPPY is the man, beyond all need of sympathy, because he has to toil hard and wearily, who is really in love with his work. I think that the great Taskmaster, who after all isn't a taskmaster at all, intended it to be that way with us all, and when there is a failure of His intention it is some one's fault as well as some one's misfortune. Certainly there must be joy in heaven when the happy song of a man who loves his work is heard through its courts. If that good day ever comes to this earth when God's Will will be done upon it as it is done above, one of the sure accompaniments of it will be a world full of men and women who love their work so that they hate to leave it, but lay it down at night with a tired sigh only that they may rest. There never was a greater heresy foisted on the world than when men were told that work was a punishment for sin. The God who worketh hitherto, and always will, laid the highest honor that he could upon His creatures when He called them to be workers alongside of Him, and He intended them to find in that work some of their greatest pleasure and joy. And the man who doesn't find that, ought to ask some serious and searching questions as to the reason. That reason does not at all lie in the nature of things.

---

Labor is given to us,  
 Let us give thanks!  
 Power worketh through us,  
 Let us give thanks!  
 Not for what we have—  
 (So might speak a slave,)  
 Not for the garnering,  
 Gratefully we sing  
 But for the mighty thing,  
 We must do, travailing!

For our task and for our  
 strength;  
 For the journey and its length;  
 For our dauntless eagerness;  
 For our humbling weariness;  
 For these, for these, O Father,  
 Let us give thanks!  
 For these, O mighty Father,  
 Take thou our thanks.

—SHAEMAS O'SHEEL

*Say not thou I will recompense evil.*

—Proverbs 20: 22

## ON HITTING BACK

7/11/28

IT IS a decidedly dangerous habit to cultivate, very much more dangerous for you than for any one else. If some one charges you wrongfully or says mean things about you, it is so natural to conclude that the only way to straighten the matter out is to try and do the same kind of thing to him. The club he throws at you, you think you ought to throw back at him, aiming it a little straighter, and throwing it a little harder. But how many times have we all found out that this business of trying to get even is a mighty poor one. Almost the universal testimony is that the very best thing to do when any one throws anything at you that isn't coming to you, is to shut your eyes tight and pretend you don't see it. It may take a good deal of poise and self-control to do it. Your eyes may long to open, and your fingers may itch to close themselves upon that missile, but if you can hold on to yourself, you will master a disagreeable situation in the only way it can be mastered. Don't hit back. In the first place it is undignified, and it is quite worth while maintaining your dignity. And then it is foolish, very foolish. And, worst of all, it is unchristian. You can scarcely afford to be all those three things at once. And especially that you do not get ahead by the process one little bit! Of course we all have done it, more or less, but if we were honest with ourselves we would admit freely that we never got any satisfaction out of it, or any advantage either. By this time we ought to have found the better way.

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Govern the lips  
As they were palace doors, the king within;  
Tranquil and fair and courteous be all words  
Which from that presence win.

—EDWIN ARNOLD

*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast.*

—Hebrews 6: 19

## A STRENUOUS FAITH

8/11/25  
**T**HOSE people who are complaining that faith is not easy in these our times, should remember that faith is not intended to be particularly easy in any time. It is a strenuous exercise of the soul, and the man who hasn't enough of it—strong, vigorous, conquering—for strenuous times has hardly enough for any time. Faith is intended for testing just as the cable is made for strain. The chain that holds the anchor was not forged for fine weather; the man who made it had the storm in view. The faith that is the product of a merely easy-going disposition, or an optimistic temperament is not worth calling Christian faith. Christian faith is something that God makes to grow in the soul of a man who exercises himself by His grace in strenuous, noble living. It is not a gift for the merely pious, who think lovely thoughts and dream life away in uselessness. It is born of the discipline of service and hardship and struggle and doubt, it grows on rugged soil, its roots strike down deep; it ought to hold in the day of great testing, since for that very day was it born. Read the Gospels over again and see if you get from them, or from any word of Jesus, any warrant for the idea that Christian faith was ever intended to be an easy-going, fair-weather sort of thing. We caricature the Christian religion very often, but never more so than when we let the sturdiness and strength and strenuousness drop out of it.

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Joy said; "How shall sweet Mirth  
 Dwell on this darkened earth?  
 If Mirth spread wings and fly  
 Then thou and I must die."  
 Hope said; "I shall not die  
 One star shines in the sky."

Joy from a dark world fled  
 Laughter was silenced.  
 The little loves watched mute  
 Beside an unstrung lute.  
 But Hope said; "I must sing,  
 My lute has still a string."

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*Thou hast made summer and winter.*

—*Psalm 74: 17*

## IF WINTER COMES

13/11/25

WHEN winter started in the other night with biting winds and drifting snow our enthusiasm was moderate and reasonably well tempered. Perhaps it is a sign that our boyish days are nearly over, but the prospect of blizzards and zero weather and all the stress and change of winter does not thrill us any more. And yet we must admit that winter as a foil for the other seasons serves a great and useful purpose, and we wouldn't be without it if we could. August looks all the more beautiful and glorious when we look back to it from November's chill and bleakness, and the spring is so joyous and bright largely because we have waited for it through the storm and cold of winter. The disagreeable things do come, but then they leave us before long, and their going brings all the greater joy. "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" If the wind blows bitter to-day is it not a sure sign that one day it will be all balm and softness and on its stir will float the robin's song? We can wait and we can endure and we can be patient. And another thing we can do, we can cherish a summer in our hearts and keep them warm and full of sunshine even in the darkest days of winter. Really the only winter any man need fear is the winter in his own soul.

There's a blush on the apple  
 A tint on the wing,  
 And the bright wind whistles  
 And the pulses sting.  
 Perish, dark memories!  
 There's light ahead;  
 This world's for the living,  
 Not for the dead.

On mart and meadow,  
 Pavement or plain:  
 On azure mountain  
 Or azure main  
 Heaven bends in blessing;  
 Lost is but won  
 Goes the good rain cloud,  
 Comes the good sun!

Down the great currents  
 Let the boat swing,  
 There was never winter  
 But brought the spring.

—EDWARD ROWLAND SILL



*God be merciful to me a sinner.*

—*Luke 18: 13*

13 | 11 | 25

## THE GREAT UNDONE

YES, I will admit that I have not been quite as bad as I might have been. There is some cause for thankfulness and satisfaction over that, undoubtedly. And yet perhaps I ought to ask a question as to why it was that I haven't been worse; what was it kept me back from some of the things I might have done? Perhaps I didn't have a good opportunity for doing some of them. Perhaps I didn't have the courage and hardihood, even if I did have the opportunity. Indeed there may have been several reasons combined to keep me from going the lengths that I might have gone, reasons that do not reflect any special glory or honor upon me. Perhaps, therefore, it would be just as seemly if I did not cherish too much of a feeling of self-satisfaction over the fact that I am no worse than I am. But what about that other aspect of my life, the good things I ought to, and might, have done? I am very much afraid that there have not been nearly as many of them as there ought to have been, and that the ones there were were not nearly as unselfish and heroic and splendid as they might have been. In this field I fear there is even less to be satisfied about than there was in the other. I know that there have been a whole multitude of fine things overlooked and left undone. I guess therefore about the only thing left to me to do is just to pray that publican's prayer "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

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I never cut my neighbor's throat;  
 My neighbor's gold I never stole;  
 I never spoiled his house and land;  
*But God have mercy on my soul*

For I am haunted night and day,  
 By all the deeds I have not done;  
 O unattempted loveliness!  
 O costly valor never won!

—MARGUERITE WILKINSON



*It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High. To show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.*

—Psalm 92: 1, 2

## THANKSGIVING

13/11/25

“IT IS a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord.”

Then why do we not do more of it? Probably we should have to think awhile before we could answer that question. And why is it such a good thing? It might take a philosopher really to answer that question, but any ordinary individual can at least glimpse an answer. It is a good thing, because it is a seemly thing, and no man can afford to go through life neglecting to do that which an enlightened intelligence and a good heart would unhesitatingly tell him he ought to do. It is a good thing, because the one and only way that a man may hope really to enjoy the gifts and blessings and opportunities of his life is to have a spirit that is appreciative of and thankful for them. Men are miserable and grasping and dissatisfied, not because they have not enough to make life comfortable and happy, but because in their eagerness to grasp for more they fail rightly to appreciate and enjoy what they have. A proper spirit of appreciation would turn thousands of miserable lives into happy ones. The argument in favor of the thanksgiving habit is a strong and convincing one. Why not heed it to-day. Surely to-day we can think of a great multitude of things that we ought to be thankful for. If we would just think them over, the exercise probably would not do us any harm and it might do us a great deal of good. It might start in our souls great waves of freshness and appreciation and joy that would make life different for all time to come.

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Come sweet South Wind! and blow around my heart,  
 Open some flower of grace to please my Lord:  
 Find there some fragrance, that may freshly start,  
 Some savour of true gratitude afford.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises.*

—Psalm 57: 7

## THE WAY OF DUTY

13/11/25  
**I** DO not care what any man may preach to me, I have it set down as one of the truths that cannot be upset, that the most inalienable and completely satisfying joy any man may have comes from his doing what he, in his soul of souls, believes to be the right thing. The hardness of it, or the unremunerativeness of it, or the sacrifices that it may demand, do not count at all when it comes down to the final analysis; it is the rightness of the thing that somehow gets down below every other consideration. The soldier in the trenches holds obstinately to his job, not because he likes it, not because its tasks are congenial. He grumbles a little, sometimes perhaps a good deal; he wishes with all his heart that it was over, yet he stays, and as he stays he smiles, because he is where the best that is in him tells him he ought to be. And the man who doesn't find joy in his own soul from doing what he ought to do, does not know at all what that word means. And thus it comes about just as the poets have always told us, we do not find joy by searching at all, we must stumble across her in our way of duty, and as we stay in that way she abides with us, a constant companion and friend, lighting up all our way with the infinite gladness of her presence.

---

Where shall I find thee, Joy? by what great marge  
 With the strong seas exulting? On what peaks  
 Rapt? or astray within what forest brown,  
 Thy light hands parting the resilient boughs?

Hast thou no answer? . . . Ah, in mine own breast  
 Except unsought thou spring, though I go forth  
 And tease the waves for news of thee, and make  
 Importunate inquisition of the woods  
 If thou didst pass that way, I shall but find  
 The brief print of thy footfall on sere leaves  
 And the salt brink, and woo thy touch in vain.

—SIR WILLIAM WATSON

*I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.*

—Jeremiah 17: 10

## BEING AND DOING

13/11/25

I BELIEVE that the great life processes work much more subtly than we often think. We say that no man lives unto himself, but we fail to understand in what far-reaching and intricate ways the statement has application. A smile awakens an answering smile, but the smile thus awakened does not end with itself, but really helps to give complexion and tone to life. Trust awakens trust, love begets love, goodness inspires goodness, and no man lives in honor and strength and integrity who does not plant the seeds of these splendid virtues in the hearts and lives of others about him. But the smile must be genuine, or it will not bear fruit in the spirit of another; goodness and honor and integrity must be real or they will never generate a harvest in any other man's soul. To be able to smile genuinely is therefore better than to be always smiling as a duty, and to be really good infinitely better than to be always consciously laboring at the task of making other people good. The longer I live the more and more am I convinced of the virtue of unconscious goodness, and the more am I suspicious of the goodness that is a little too conscious of itself.

---

The folk we see, yet never meet,  
Whether on country road or street,  
With faces shining, bright of eye,  
Turning to wave a last good-bye—  
I wonder if they know the thrill  
They give me, when I cross the hill.

I wonder if they ever guess  
How much they scatter happiness  
To many a lonely traveller  
With whom they never may confer;  
And how much joy their presence gives  
To one who struggles as he lives.

—CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

*So that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the Day of Christ*      *Philippians 1: 10*

## THE REAL THING

4/11/25  
**S**HAM anywhere is an ill thing, but in all the world there is nothing more utterly evil than sham religion. That truth is not a new discovery, for the old Hebrew prophets told their nation about it over and over and over again. But in these terrible days, when lurid lights are revealing many things that were half hidden or altogether forgotten in more prosaic times, it is coming home to us as it has seldom come home to men in the world's history. Religion that isn't genuine, and honest, and sincere, and all the way through what it seems to be on the outside, is not a good thing but an evil thing, no matter how piously it may be professed or how industriously its exercises may be gone through with. Religion has lived with narrowness and bigotry and ignorance, though it is not the friend of any one of them, but it can never live with pretence and make-believe. Whatever religion is or is not, it must be honest and sound and sincere. Sham will kill it as frost kills an orchid. The most hideous and evil thing in all this world is a man basely professing a religion that he does not possess. For this reason the demand for conformity in religion is a somewhat dangerous demand, for it sometimes induces insincerity and leads to the professing of a faith that isn't sincerely held, and a faith that isn't sincere is very much worse than no faith at all. Whatever you are guilty of never be guilty of that monstrosity—a sham religion. And especially never be guilty of trying to foist it off on to some one else.

---

He that has light within his own clear breast  
 May sit i' the corner, and enjoy the bright day;  
 But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts  
 Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;  
 Himself is his own dungeon.

—JOHN MILTON

*But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.*

—2 Thessalonians 3: 13

## SOMETHING MORE NEEDED

A/1/25

**I**T IS always that way, is it not? As long as life lasts the time never seems to come when a man can lay the obligations of life off him, can stop the race that is given him to run, or can say that the struggle is all over, and the rest of the time can be given to care-free ease. The finest gift or service of to-day must be followed up by something to-morrow or it will lose its fruitfulness and value. The loftiest achievement in character can never reach a safe resting place. Life's work is never done and life's beckoning is never over. The only stopping by the way that is justified is that which gives us new strength for better and harder tasks. We may complain at this, and wish that it were otherwise; but it is the sum of all wisdom to realize that it cannot be, and it is the consummation of all courage to accept the situation and just keep on climbing up the hard, yet brightening way of better things. After all climbing is no particular hardship to hard muscles and a strong will. And man is so made that overcoming and achieving are in themselves sources of real satisfaction. It was inevitable that it should be so; that man's life, if it was to be satisfying to him at all, had to be an uphill, unresting climb.

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Life is a day,  
     A dawn and a sun setting;  
 Life is a way,  
     A dream of past forgetting.

Life is a robe  
     My soul is wearing;  
 Life is an hour,  
     Time's sceptre bearing.

Life is a star,  
     Holy and high endeavor;  
 Life is the soul  
     Limitless for ever.

—THEODOSIA PEARCE



*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for He is faithful that promised.*

—Hebrews 10: 23

## MAKING THE BEST OF IT

19/11/25

THIS isn't an ideal world, and life always has its drawbacks and limitations. State it at its best and living is only a getting along as best we may, overcoming and succeeding where we can, and making the best of the situation where we cannot. And even the triumph and the success often leave something more still to be desired. It is wisdom to reckon with life after that fashion, but it makes a great deal of difference as to the spirit in which we reckon with it. We may accept the pessimist's philosophy which says that in a world like ours there can be nothing much that is really worth while, or we may stand firmly and heroically by our faith that even in this present somewhat topsy-turvy situation to make the best of things is a splendid achievement and worthy of our finest struggle and endeavor. And the one attitude will cut the nerve of all high planning and noble endeavor, while the other will keep us working away, hopefully and earnestly and cheerfully, at the task of making the best of things, and putting into life all the good that is possible. Judged of its results surely it is clear which is the wise and sound philosophy. Surely it is clear that a generous, optimistic faith for life is sound and sane and workable—and therefore very good.

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It's wiser being good than bad;

It's safer being meek than fierce;

It's fitter being sane than mad.

My own hope is, a sun will pierce

The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;

That after Last returns the First,

Though a wide compass round be fetched;

That what began best can't end worst,

Nor what God blessed once prove accurst.

—ROBERT BROWNING



*I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice, and to do good so long as they live. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy good in all his labor, is the gift of God. —Ecclesiastes 3: 12, 13*

## A GREAT TREAT

19/11/25

SOME one last week in speaking of the wonderful days that are now with us said that in his thought to be alive at the present time should be considered as a great treat. The expression seemed a striking one and it set me a-thinking. How would it be if we got into the way of looking on life in that way for a few weeks? Life is a trial—that is the way some folk look at it, never seeming to get away from that view. Life is a heavy burden and responsibility—that is another verdict upon it, with something to justify it, no doubt. But if we could get away from all these doleful and depressing conceptions, at least for a little while, and could think of living as a wonderful privilege, would it not make for freshness and inspiration and joy and light-heartedness, and ultimately for much better living? For I am thoroughly convinced that if many of us were very much happier and more light-hearted than we are we would be living very much better and more useful lives. Wouldn't that fresh look at life be in every way a fine and helpful thing? And it is just as true to the realities of things as is the dolorous way we have been looking at it. If you do not quite believe that, it is surely time that you should get around where you can take a fresh and unprejudiced look at things. For some reason you are not viewing life from the right angle; you are not seeing all the facts and seeing them in their true and proper perspective; the shadow is too much on the pathway of your life.

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Best trust the happy moments. What they gave  
 Makes man less fearful of the certain grave,  
 And gives his work compassion and new eyes.  
 The days that make us happy make us wise.

—JOHN MASEFIELD

*For by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*  
*—Matthew 12: 37*

## THE WORD IN SEASON

19/11/25  
**T**HESE are sensitive times. We see signs of that on all sides. Men are stirred out of the usual, are easy to be influenced and impressed as they have not been for a generation. That fact puts a very serious obligation upon us all. We have never had in all our lives such an opportunity for speaking a good, strong, uplifting word effectively as we have to-day. If we will talk the things that make for peace and righteousness, and brotherhood among men—the things that our great Elder Brother taught us—men will hear them and heed them as they have not done. But if we talk bloodshed and bitterness and hatred, will they not hear and heed also? In fact if we even think them, is there not great danger that we put our thought into the heart of some other man. For the nation's sake, for the world's sake, for humanity's sake, for the sake of the great future toward which God would lead us, let us now say the good, the helpful, the charitable, the Christian thing. It never needed saying worse, and it never could have been said more helpfully. And I am persuaded that we know very well what that good and helpful and charitable and Christian thing is that we should say. But it takes courage sometimes to say it; and always it takes discernment and a fine spirit. That may be where our lack lies.

---

A wonderful thing is a seed—

The one thing deathless for ever;  
 The one thing changeless, utterly true;  
 For ever old and for ever new,  
 And fickle and faithless never.

Plant blessings and blessings will bloom;

Plant hate and hate will grow.  
 You can sow to-day; to-morrow shall bring  
 The blossom that proves what sort of a thing  
 Is the seed—the seed you sow.

—WIRT SIKES

*And He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; And none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest thou.*

—Daniel 4: 35

## WORRYING OVER THE WEATHER

19/11/25

A CERTAIN well-known writer tells us that we give altogether too much thought and attention to the weather. After somewhat close scrutiny of my own and other folks' habits in this regard, I have come to a very pronounced opinion that he is right. It is true that it has been very cold in this part of the world during the past few weeks. The street cars have been hideously cold, we have nearly perished on the bleak street corners waiting for them to come, and even our homes, do what we would, often have been chilling and comfortless enough. But I will venture the assertion, that the people who let their minds run on the discomforts of the cold, have added at least fifty per cent. to their actual suffering from it. I have decided that there are three things we should do in this matter. First, absolutely refuse to talk about the badness of the weather; second, refuse to think about it; third, get the wholesome philosophy that it is better to make friends with the weather than to be always and pugnaciously at outs with it. For a sane Christian man to spend about half his time complaining against God's weather scarcely seems consistent, does it? If it is God's weather then surely it must be best! And if it is not His, whose is it?

---

Which ever way the wind doth blow,  
Some heart is glad to have it so;  
Then blow it east or blow it west,  
The wind that blows, that wind is best.

My little craft sails not alone;  
A thousand fleets from every zone  
Are out upon a thousand seas;  
And what for me were favoring breeze  
Might dash another, with the shock  
Of doom, upon some hidden rock.

—CAROLINE ATHERTON MASON

*But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me who is to be Ruler in Israel.*

—Micah 5: 2

## JOB ENOUGH

THERE are a great many big problems before the world to-day whose solutions baffle and bother us a very great deal. We cannot help being intensely interested in them, and indeed we ought not to help it even if we could. But it often seems to us that we cannot do much for their solution, for the solution cannot come through any individual procedure or method. The great and pressing economic and social problems of our time seem to be quite outside the tiny circle of any service or help that we can render! And yet these big problems have a very definite relation to the little things that we can do. Society will never get made over after the mind and thought of Jesus, and become a great brotherhood, until the individuals who compose it become really Christian in all their relations. So, while we are thinking of the big problems, as we must think of them, we ought to keep very industriously and earnestly working away at the little, yet hard enough, problem of making our own life Christian. That may prove job enough. And how much doing it faithfully will help in the big job, who may say! At any rate, the thing we can do is the thing we are responsible for, and not the thing we cannot do. And to keep on doing that well, must be at least one very important part of the divine programme for us.

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Sometimes I wish that I might do  
 Just one grand deed and die,  
 And by that one grand deed reach up  
 To meet God in the sky.  
 But such is not Thy way, O God,  
 Not such is Thy decree,  
 But deed by deed, and tear by tear,  
 Our souls must climb to Thee.

—G. A. STUDDERT KENNEDY

*Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.*

—Proverbs 4: 25

## THINKING STRAIGHT

THINKING straight is a very fine and also a very difficult achievement. And this is true not so much because of our intellectual limitations, as by reason of a fact of quite another sort. Where self-interest is involved the vision is very apt to be diverted from the straight line. So often it happens that when, superficially, we think we are putting up a genuine argument in favour of a certain course of moral action, what we are doing in reality is trying to dress up the course that we desire to take so as to make it look morally logical and convincing. For if we haven't the courage and character necessary for the willing and the doing of the absolutely right thing, very few of us ever get beyond the point where we do not like to appear as if we had. But if, instead of trying to camouflage our own desires, we tried to look with unfettered eyes right into the heart of every moral problem and issue that confronted us, how much braver and better it would be. It is hard, but as I say, it is a great achievement and worth making a great try and struggle for. And it will prove to be blessed as well as hard. For I am sure that straight and honest thinking generally leads on to happy, sunlit-ways. To believe the opposite always seemed to me to hand too much of this world over into the hands of the forces that are sinister and evil. Straight thinking and straight living are best from every point of view, even for ordinary lives just like yours and mine.

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Straight runs, with neither fret nor swerve,  
 The sharp-drawn line of duty—  
 Soft flows, with many a waving curve,  
 The lovely line of Beauty.  
 Follow the first inflexibly, and ever thou shalt see,  
 The second's fairest arabesques run side by side with thee.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN



*This also, knowing the time, that now it is high time for you to awake out of sleep.*

—Romans 13: 11

## WISHING VS. DOING

OUR best deeds are those we never do. We dream about them, think about them, talk about them, and even intend to do them; but they are never done. If men were judged by the things they would like to do, or even by the things they intend to do, there would be a great increase in the number of saints. But saint-hood proper is only born when intention is translated into actuality. The world is bettered not by what is wished, but by what is done. This spoils many prayers. If men were honestly to set about answering their own prayers, the millennial glory would dawn without delay. But the sad fact is—wishes write no letters, feed no hungry, heal no sick, house no homeless, relieve no distress; but leave the poor old world to struggle on unhelped. But the wishing saints place great reliance on to-morrow. To-day is too short to do anything, but to-morrow shall last for a thousand years. What fools we are! One of the most tragic sights this world ever sees is that of the man who wishes well, means well, intends well, but never gets to doing well till death overtakes him. If there is nothing of that indecisive procrastinating habit about you, thank God for it. But if there is, when, O when, are you going to get over it! You say "to-morrow"! but saying that has ruined more fine enterprises than all other things combined. If you are ever going to have even *one* to your credit you will have to learn to say "to-day."

---

He was not strong enough to break away  
 From ignorant bonds which hinder men and blind;  
 To snap the prison bars of yesterday,  
 Or curb the natural follies of mankind.  
 He heard the ages calling, and the skies  
 And mountains, and, to greet him, song on song  
 Of deathless poets crowned with music rise—  
 Yet swooned 'midst clashing chords of right and wrong.

—MARGARET SACKVILLE



*Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.*

—Lamentations 3: 40

## PUT IT TO THE TEST

IF A MAN is in doubt about any of the teachings of his Christian faith, the wise and sensible thing to do is to put them to the test. If he doesn't quite believe in prayer, the thing to do is to start in and pray. Quite a few people do not believe in prayer because they never pray, but surely they are the last people in the world to give testimony in that matter. The people who pray believe in it. The Christian people who give generously and whole-heartedly believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive. The man who doesn't believe that ought to put the statement to the test, even though it might hurt a little to do it. If it is true, it is a great and splendid truth that it would be a pity not to get the good out of. Every man ought to try it. The Christian teaching puts a big premium on neighborliness and consideration. The man who has been more or less a grouch all his life ought to start in to test that claim. He may be making a big mistake; his philosophy of life, as shown in his conduct, may be all wrong. And, if he isn't a coward, when it is put up to him he ought to let it go to the test. Yes indeed he should. And there are some things that even you and I should put to the test, and if we are as wise as we claim to be we will not hesitate to do it. And I am sure that if we did put some of them to the test after a thorough-going fashion we would find that there was vastly more truth and reality in them than we had ever imagined.

---

How do I know that God is good? I don't.  
I gamble like a man. I bet my life  
Upon one side in life's great war. I must,  
I can't stand out. I must take sides. The man  
Who is neutral in this fight is not  
A man. He's bulk and body without breath,  
Cold leg of lamb without mint sauce. A fool.

—G. A. STUDDERT KENNEDY

*Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

—1 Corinthians 5: 8

## SINCERITY

28/11  
**I**T MAY not always be binding upon a man to say what he means, but it is always his bounden duty to mean what he says. They have been criticizing Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Bernard Shaw in England as the leaders of a kind of topsy-turvy spirit in literature that delights in paradoxes and equivocal, and brilliant perversions. Sometimes you will not be able to understand what either one of these entertaining writers really means, but in general you can reckon that at least the thing he says is not the thing he means. It is a dangerous habit. The critics are right. To not mean it can scarcely be a justification for a literature; it cannot in fact be accepted as a justification for anything only a very poor practical joke. The continual joker, though he may entertain us for a time, gets to be a great weariness. There is nothing lasts quite like sincerity. It is such a serviceable, everyday kind of virtue. Of course it might be added that to be sincere a man does not at all need to be stupid, though this seems to be the idea held by some otherwise intelligent people. Some folks even laugh at sincerity, as if it were some strange survival from an unsophisticated age, but it is yet one of the best things we have with us, a thing to be cherished as the pure gold itself. And the cynical tone that mocks at or belittles it is something to be discouraged and frowned down upon as one of the most sinister influences in this perplexing modern life of ours.

---

Take on yourself

But your sincerity, and you take on  
Good promise for all climbing; fly for truth  
And hell shall have no storm to crush your flight,  
No laughter to vex down your loyalty.

—EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

*And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

—1 Corinthians 13: 13

## THE GRACE OF GOOD TEMPER

25/11/2

I BELIEVE absolutely what I have said often before, that anger may sometimes be a healthy Christian virtue. But, excellent virtue though it is, its exercise is beset with grave and serious dangers. For instance, it is alarmingly easy for hatred of a wrong thing or a wrong act to pass over into hatred of a person, and hatred of a person can never be quite Christian or right. Thus it is very easy to indulge an unrighteous and wicked anger and persuade ourselves all the while that we are being only righteously and conscientiously indignant. Apparently there are quite a few people who think that they would be traitors to the good if they did not keep themselves in an almost continuous state of bad humor and ill-temper against the wrong. And as a matter of fact one of the great reasons for the failure of the good has been that so many of its advocates haven't been able to keep themselves in good temper over it. Since the world began who ever knew of a heated controversy over religion doing one little bit of good? If we cannot keep love in our hearts, and the sweetness and kindliness that root themselves in love, our zeal for good causes will be but a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. When love goes out, nothing else is worth while. And nothing else is effective or ever gets us anywhere.

---

The night has a thousand eyes,  
 And the day but one;  
 Yet the light of the bright world dies  
 With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,  
 And the heart but one;  
 Yet the light of a whole life dies  
 When love is done.

—F. W. BOURDILLON

*That we must through many tribulations enter into the Kingdom of God.*

—Acts 14: 22

## A LESSON OF LIFE

28/11/25  
**WE** MUST never be guilty of the egregious folly of rejecting and contemning the blessings of life that are held out to us by the hand of pain. There is often a quality to them that most others seem to miss. We are told that after Peniel Jacob went halting all his days, but the Jacob as we like to think of him, the Jacob who was worth while, probably never could have been without the struggle and fierce conflict of those hours. Struggle begets strength; pain develops patience; sorrow gives birth to sympathy. The Master of Men Himself apparently never really ran away from the easy, painless joys of life, but it was "the joy that was set before Him," and which He knew could not be reached save through the Cross and the shame, that He determined He would not miss. He sought no Cross for its own sake, but He knew that when the Cross lay in the way of duty, duty would utterly glorify it, and that the pain of love and service would be turned into a great and abiding joy. And that is one of the lessons of life no man should miss. Like Jesus, we mustn't seek crosses for their own sake, but when they come in the way of duty we must take them for love's sake, and as we take them we shall find that they open up to us a way into life's finest joys and satisfactions. An earlier Christianity was somewhat given to seeking crosses for their own sake, but we in this latter day will make as great a mistake if we form the habit of running away from crosses. Surely Jesus has taught for ever that lesson of the glory of the cross that is set before one.

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Not in soft speech is told the earthly story,  
 Love of all Loves! that showed Thee for an hour;  
 Shame was Thy Kingdom, and reproach Thy glory,  
 Death Thine Eternity, the Cross Thy Power.

—F. W. H. MEYERS

*Give attendance to reading.*

—1 Timothy 4: 13

## BOOKS AS FRIENDS

28/11/25-

THERE are some books, of course, that hardly make good friends because, for one reason or another, they are not good books. But besides these there is a most wonderful array from which any man may choose the most delightful and inspiring companions for his way. And no matter who the man is, or what his mood or need, he may always find the fellowship that he requires in books. In sadness or in gladness; in perplexity or out upon some plain, smooth road; when life is full of zest or when hope and courage fail and fall away, there is always some word somewhere that has been written down out of a full heart and a ripe experience that will comfort and bless and inspire, if only we are fortunate enough to know where to find it. The man who reads the most books is not always the man who gets the most out of his reading, but rather the man who comes into the most intimate and friendly relations with the books that he reads. To have a few books of which one can think as of real friends, and to which one can turn as mood or need direct, is to make reading a wonderful boon and blessing; for good books are the kind of friends which never fail or prove us false. But to have books thus as our friends, we must come to know them and to love them, and that takes both time and understanding. But understanding will come through intimacy, and the time spent in learning to love good books could not possibly be better spent.

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We get no good  
 By being ungenerous, even to a book,  
 And calculating profit, so much help  
 By so much reading. It is rather when  
 We gloriously forget ourselves and plunge  
 Soul-forward, headlong, into a book's profound,  
 Impassioned for its beauty and salt of truth,  
 'Tis then we get the right good from a book.

—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING



*Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it.* —James 5: 7

## WHILE WE ARE WAITING

28/11 25- IT SEEMS weary waiting till that fair day of peace shall dawn, does it not? Winter is drawing on and with its coming the suffering and hardship of the brave men who are fighting for us will be multiplied many fold. And still the end keeps out of sight and no one can tell us anything as to how or when it will come. Well, what can we do about it? Not much, perhaps, only try to be patient, and as trustful and courageous as we may. But yes, we can do this too, we can remember that God is waiting very much as we are. He too has to let these human processes work themselves out. He would like the end, even as we cannot, and yet, speaking with all reverence, He cannot hurry it. And having done what He can to heal this great hurt of the world we must think of Him as waiting in patience until the will and temper of men will let Him work His purpose. And if we have done and are doing what we can, we ought to be able in some measure to enter into His patience; we ought to be able in some degree to wait patiently with Him. And I am sure that He is waiting for greater and better and more glorious things to come, and therefore I am sure that we ought to be too. And while we wait we will never give up that hope, for I know He will never give it up.

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How long, O Lord, how long  
 Doth thy handmaid linger?  
 She who shall right the wrong?  
 Make the oppressed strong?  
 Sweet morrow bring her!  
 Hasten her over the sea,  
 O Lord, ere hope be fled—  
 Bring her to men and to me!  
 O slave, pray still on thy knee—  
 "Freedom's ahead!"

—ROBERT BUCHANAN



*The fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

—*Ephesians 1: 23*

## THE BEST IN THE WORLD

THERE are men who do not believe it; perhaps, indeed, you are one of them, but it is absolutely true, nevertheless. The religion of Jesus Christ is the most common-sense, practical, usable thing in the world to-day. It will show up well in more places than will anything else; it will prove itself of more actual and significant value in the labors and responsibilities and duties of life, some of them heavy and exacting enough, than anything else that you can name. It is the thing that you need and I need to make life worth while, to give it a genuine meaning, to make it a profitable as well as an enjoyable thing. We will get on poorly through life without it, that is the actual and positive fact. It is the spice that gives zest to the whole dish; the string without which the music halts and stumbles; the tonic that makes red blood and vigor and ambition for living a real life. If we haven't it, my! my! how much we are missing. If we haven't it, life can never have a tithe of the scope and interest and satisfaction that it ought to have. If we haven't it, we are doing without the biggest and the best that the God who made us can give. With all my soul I commend it to you. And I am speaking with all earnestness and out of an experience that no one can gainsay.

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God is my friend. And you  
 Are my friend, too.  
 I want my friends to hear of one another,  
 And so I talk of you to God at night;  
 I do not talk to you of Him, it's true  
 I will admit, as often as I might.  
 But then, you see, He's so much like a brother  
 I wouldn't want to ever seem to boast;  
 But still it's most  
 Because I'm waiting till you meet, and you  
 Each know the other as I know you two.

—MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

*What time I am afraid, I will put my trust in thee.*

—*Psalm 56: 3*

## THE FUTURE

WE THINK and plan for the future because we are creatures of intelligence and cannot help doing so. God made us for that, and haphazard thriftlessness and lack of foresight are no virtues in His eyes. But intelligent planning for the future is one thing, and burdensome and fretting worry about it is another. God did not intend us for the latter, and when we are guilty of it we are going quite counter to His will and thought. We ought to reckon generously with the fact that the future is with Him. He is as interested in our life as we can possibly be, and there is every chance that His plan for our best and highest good is not going to miscarry. In fact, about the only thing that can make it miscarry is for us to get fussy and fidgety and undertake to interfere with it too much. God Himself cannot do much for a man or woman who persists in carrying a burden of anxious care for the coming days. And the legitimate planning for the future that we ought to do is most surely made useless by the fretting and worrying that we oughtn't to do. About the only thing the matter with the future of most of us is the fear and fretting that we do about it now. When we come to it, it will not have any of the things that fret us to-day, or if it does, they will be found not to deserve the worry that to-day we are giving them. A coward about the future is the worst kind of coward, and his cowardice is a particularly fatal thing in his life.

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There is no storm but this  
 Of your own Cowardise  
 That braves you out;  
 You are the storme that mocks  
 Yourselves; you are the rocks  
 Of your owne doubt.  
 Besides this feare of danger ther's no danger here;  
 And he that here fears danger, does deserve his fear.

—RICHARD CRASHAW

## DECEMBER

*"If there were no December in the year,  
What would the children do?" December  
asks.*

*"Kept always at their foolish school-day tasks,  
They'd grow to be like older folk, I fear.*

*"But when I come, and Christmas with me too,  
We're loaded down with gifts and toys and  
mirth*

*For all the little boys and girls on earth,  
Oh, what, without us, would the children do?"*

*"What should we do without you? Oh, but  
you—*

*If we were not here, waiting to be glad—*

*No matter what delightful toys you had,  
What, without us, would you and Christmas  
do?"*

—KATHARINE L. JOHNSTON



*Be strong, and of good courage; fear not, neither be dismayed.*

—1 Chronicles 22: 13

11/12/25

## A PROPHET OF GOD

EVERY brave, and hopeful, and courageous man or woman is a prophet of God, and there was never a time in the history of the world when the message of such a spirit was more needed. There are doleful and long-faced people going around with the story that this war is a proof that the world is too bad to be saved, and that the end of all things draws nigh. We ought not to pay more attention to them than we do to any other kind of hysteria or foolishness. This is the time to be sane and strong, and full of faith and courage. This is the time to remember that weakness, and doubt, and fear, are not given a place among the fruits of true religion. This is the time for a healthy, religious faith, that knows this to be God's world, and set for redemption and not for destruction, to assert itself, to commend itself to a world that needs its impulse so much. This is a time of all times for us to keep on believing God and looking on the bright and glorious side of the great shield of destiny. Of course yesterday was bad enough; and to-day isn't as good as it ought to be; but don't you see that wonderful to-morrow! Through all ages prophets have been talking about it, and seeing and picturing its glory. Surely the modern prophets ought to see it and rejoice in it too. If not, they will prove themselves untrue to the visions and hopes of all the centuries.

---

King Hassan, well beloved, was wont to say  
 When aught went wrong or any project failed;  
 "To-morrow, friends, will be another day!"  
 And in that faith he slept—and so prevailed.

Long live this proverb! While the world shall roll  
 To-morrows, fresh, shall rise from out the night,  
 And new baptize the indomitable soul  
 With courage for its never-ending fight.

—JAMES BUCKHAM

*But hallow ye the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.*

—Jeremiah 17: 22

## WHAT TO DO WITH SUNDAY

5/12/25  
**T**HE world is moving, and many things are changing. Time makes ancient good uncouth, and the world renews itself in many ways. And yet we do not see that there is any need for a very radical change in the keeping of Sunday. We are not so strict in some ways as our fathers were, and that, probably, is to the good. We are not afraid of whistling on Sunday, the day is not so austere kept, and there is more of wholesome pleasure and joy in it. But it still remains that it is better to go to church on Sunday than it is to go golfing, better for the body probably in the long run, better for the mind, certainly better for the spirit. It is still true that the dropping of business and the more enervating pleasures and excitements for one day in seven is a way of renewal and refreshment for men that helps as nothing else could to keep life sound and wholesome and vigorous. It still remains very clear that Sunday is meant to be a day of far-reaching good for the human race, and that we will retain it as such by making very few radical changes in the manner of its observance, allowing only such as the more complex life of our modern times makes necessary. It is still a fact that if we allow selfish individual interests to break down all the sanctions that surround the day we will thereby deprive our race of something very precious and of almost infinite worth. The best thing to do with Sunday is to keep it.

---

Bright shadows of true rest! Some shoots of bliss;  
 Heaven once a week;  
 The next world's gladness prepossess in this;  
 A day to seek;  
 Eternity in time; the steps by which  
 We climb above all ages; camps that light  
 Man through his heap of dark days; and the rich  
 And full redemption of the whole week's flight.

—HENRY VAUGHAN



*And she brought forth her firstborn son; and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

—Luke 2: 7

## MAKING ROOM FOR HIM

ONE simple sentence in the story of the Incarnation has always greatly impressed the thought and imagination of the Christian world. The Christ-child had his birth in the rude Bethlehem manger, "because there was no room for them in the inn." There is, it must be admitted, a touch of pathos in that, and many a man has found moistness in his eyes as he has come to that part of the story. Of course, from His point of view, it didn't make much difference, and yet how incongruous it was. And if the innkeeper and his thronging guests had only known, they might not have elbowed Him out among the cattle. They might not, and yet we are not so sure. We do know this, that for many long years he has tried to get into some hearts and homes and societies and businesses and civilizations and there has not seemed to be much place for Him, but thronging self-interests, ambitions and indifferences have elbowed Him out and taken up all the room. And Bethlehem had this excuse, they did not know Him; but surely we, after all these years, cannot say that! Is it not the tragedy of tragedies in any life, anywhere, at any time, that it has no room for the Christ of Bethlehem? Even for His sake we ought not to crowd Him out the way we sometimes do. And surely, surely, we ought not for our own sakes!

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No, not the Cross on which He hung,  
 Nor blood that wet each bitter thorn,  
 Nor cruel scourgings of hate's tongue,  
 Not yet the writhing thief's hot scorn—  
 Not these His cup of woe could crown;  
 But that which crushed His breast with pain  
 Was, that He came unto His own,  
 And to them came, alas! in vain.

—JAMES B. KENYON

*I said in my haste, all men are a lie.*

—Psalm 116: 11

## I SAID IN MY HASTE

5/12/25  
**I** SAID in my haste all men are profiteers. That is bringing the old Hebrew psalmist down to date. The ancient verdict needed correction, as the event proved; probably the modern one does too. We hear so much about what this man and the other is doing in coining the world's calamities into current gold that we too are in danger of making some hasty and very ill-considered conclusions. By all means let us think out some way of getting after the real profiteer; but let us not get into the way of thinking that there is one of them living in nearly every house but ours. Notwithstanding all we have been told, the majority of men, even in this day, are making honest livings, and acting something like considerate and kindly human beings ought to act. And we ought to remember that, for it will help to keep social goodwill in our world and keep alive a spirit of good fellowship and mutual appreciation. And if ever our world needed these things it needs them now. And one of the wickedest things the profiteer is doing is helping to kill off faith in humanity. But just the same we oughtn't to let him affect us unduly, for where there is one of him there are still a dozen honest and righteous men.

---

Let's form the habit of thinking that good  
 Lies uppermost in the hearts of men.  
 It isn't unlikely that if we would,  
 We'd suddenly find our world imbued—  
 All those about us, not one now and then—  
 With the kindly spirit of brotherhood.

Let's form the habit of thinking that good  
 Is not a plant so hopelessly rare  
 That we need to search in some far-off wood—  
 Alas! we never have understood—  
 For it grows in profusion everywhere,  
 If we only look for it as we should.

—IDA M. THOMAS

*In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.*

—Luke 1: 75

## OUR BEST FOR A DAY

5/12/25

IT OUGHT to be possible to live our days in such fashion that we will find much pleasure and satisfaction in looking back over the journey we have come. Too great self-satisfaction is not good, and yet if we have filled the days as they have come to us with sincerity and earnestness and unselfish effort, and have tried to make them count for the best things, the memory of them ought to be measurably satisfactory and comforting. If, by the grace of God, we can live each day that it will have no deed or thought of ours in it of which we would have reason to feel ashamed, that will be a good start. And then if we can add this, that each day will have some act or thought of real unselfishness and service, we will have gone a long way toward laying up a pleasant memory for the days to come. And even though it might be that the past record has not been quite satisfactory, can we not begin from to-day to make everything better? And there can be few thoughts in life more uplifting than that one, that it does climb up to better things with the progress of the years. If we only can cherish the right idea about life and hold fast to the right thought as to what it ought to be, it should be easy to make it grow better and more satisfactory as every day goes by. And thus retrospect and recollection will also add their quota to the joy and goodness of living. And surely that is as it ought to be. That any backward look upon our lives should fill us with regret and sorrow of heart is certainly not in the divine thought for us.

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As we awaken from our sleep upon each coming morn  
May it be with the joyful thought, another day is born—  
Another day on this dear earth that God has made so fair,  
Another day of thankfulness for all His love and care,  
Another day to try to walk the path our Master trod,  
Another day with loving friends, another day with God.

—HELEN LAMBE

*It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.*

—Lamentations 3: 27

## LIFE'S GOLDEN AGE

11/23  
 "AT THIRTY," a quaint writer put it, "a man is busy carving his name on the pillar of fame; at sixty he has either finished his job or thrown away his jack-knife." And that was about what Dr. Osler said years ago at Johns Hopkins University, in that speech which received so much newspaper comment, and so many fierce criticisms. Here in Toronto, at the Canadian Club luncheon and yonder at the great Baltimore seat of learning, the great physician's emphasis was placed upon this statement that the years between twenty-five and forty were the golden years of manhood, the constructive period *par excellence*, the time when the effective, progressive living work of the world was done. Those were the years of plenty, the years when a man's mental capital was largest, and his reserve power the greatest; the years when a man had the sun on his back, and was going forward to life's noon, and not away from it. Whether men approve it or reject it, the great physician's word has an important lesson in it. It is the lesson of making the most of the earlier years of manhood. It is the lesson of work, hard, honest, faithful work, the best a man can do, during these fruitful years of opportunity. Squander them and you squander life. Spoil them and you spoil those succeeding. Waste them in folly or indolence, and you mortgage the whole future and waste precious opportunities that do not come again.

---

Every morning a ship comes in  
 With a message, if you listen.  
 Are you waiting for it upon the pier?  
 Do you see its white sails listen?

Every morning a ship comes in  
 From somewhere over the sea,  
 With always a cargo. Its name, you ask?  
 It is Opportunity.

—IDA M. THOMAS

*There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great wealth.*

—Proverbs 13: 7

## AN UNPOPULAR DOCTRINE

7/12/25

**T**HRIFT is a virtue with limitations, but nevertheless it is a virtue. Pushed to an extreme it becomes one of the meanest of the vices, but in wholesome quantity it is a good, healthful thing. We haven't enough of it in our day, and are suffering thereby. We talk tragically of the high cost of living, but a good deal of the trouble lies in the fact that the living is high, higher than it ought to be. The discipline of sacrificing little things for thrift's sake is good for the character, as well as for the purse. To manage our resources with a measure of prudence is a righteous thing, and not to do so is not only a misfortune, but dangerously near a sin. To be simple and unostentatious in one's habits and practices makes much for peace of mind and genuine happiness, but it makes also for righteousness and honesty. If instead of complaining at the fate that only gives us a modest amount of this world's goods, we tried faithfully to use it modestly, we would probably get more satisfaction out of it, find it go further, and in the end be the better Christians for our effort. Why is it that most of us do not really believe that. We have seen it proven thousands of times, and yet we are not quite convinced. But until we do learn it and actually come to live up to all its implications, I fear there are many disappointments and much unhappiness ahead of us. Some of life's happiness at least comes through learning cheerfully to do without.

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Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content;  
 The quiet mind is richer than a crown;  
 Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;  
 The poor estate scorns fortune's angry frown;  
 Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss,  
 Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

—ROBERT GREENE



*The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments.*

— 2 Timothy 4: 13



## GIVE ATTENTION TO READING

THE man who has formed a taste for the reading of good books has put himself in the way of one of the greatest and most enduring blessings that life can bring him. In the first place he has made happiness possible, the real kind of happiness that comes chiefly out of getting out of oneself and thinking of other people and getting interested in the great world of men and of things, things both of the body and of the spirit. The man who can read and appreciate good books need never have any really lonely hours, or ever lack for good and pleasant and profitable company. And then the man who has formed this taste for good reading has entered upon a way of truth and knowledge and enlightenment that must prove a way of life unto him. He has made great men and good men his friends, and great men and good men at their best too. And there is no reckoning of what that will do for him. Both greatness and goodness are contagious at times, and keeping company with great and good men has never in all the world's history been a profitless thing. If you haven't yet learned to appreciate and love good books, I believe I would begin to try to do so now, for even it is a thing that can be learned. And even partially learned there is great profit in it. And it is profit whose breadth and meaning and fulness cannot be expressed or measured.

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We have made a country for your knowing,  
Wide and splendid—You within your windowed walls  
Open up the doors, whence paths go flowing  
Where the trumpet in the forest peals and calls  
To high venture, Old Romance and Storied Cities  
Folded in the lap of purple seas  
Where, more lovely than your hopes are or your pities,  
Sail behind high gleaming sail proudly from dreams port-of-hail,  
Come great argosies.

—B.D.H.



*But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*

—1 Corinthians 13: 10

## HOW SHOULD WE SEE IT

*18. 2. 18. 5.*

LET us be fair even to the Church. Maligning it is not any more a virtue than maligning anything else. To prove that the Church is not performing its full task is not to prove that it is no longer of any use in the world. To show that many Christian men are not fully Christians is not to show that the imperfect religion they have is of no use to themselves or to anyone else. There are many and mighty big obstacles in the way of making all men and all human institutions thoroughly Christian. There is the obstacle of human passion, and lust, and selfishness. This may prevent every man of us at some point from realizing fully the Christian ideal to-day, but that does not say that we are not, even if very slowly, growing toward that ideal. There is the obstacle of human ignorance. We don't know how to build a true Christian society even if we really tried to. But that doesn't say that we are not slowly learning to do better. The best of us are only half-Christians, if we are even that. Our civilization is only a half-civilization, with many barbarous and inhuman elements in it. Our Christianity is only half-Christianity. But then, isn't that something? And the half we have we are not going to throw away. We may sometimes despair that there is so little goodness in the world, but it is just as sensible to rejoice that there is so much.

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Who waits his time shall surely see  
The triumph of his constancy;  
When, without let, or bar, or stay,  
The coming of His perfect day  
Shall sweep the powers of might away;  
And faith, replumed for nobler flight.  
And hope, aglow with radiance bright,  
And love, in loveliness bedight,  
Shall greet the morning light.

—JOHN OXENHAM

*And why call ye me Lord, and do not the things which I say?*

—Luke 6: 46

## A PRESSING QUESTION

10/12/25

WE really ought to have learned the lessons that Jesus came to teach us better than we have. He was very plain and simple and very much in earnest, and there doesn't seem to be any excuse for us. He said so much about kindness and sympathy and love and brotherhood, and yet what, after all these years, do we know about these things! Why haven't the words that He spoke and the life that He lived become more influential in the institutions and movements of our time? Today we gladly pay tribute to His goodness and unselfishness and simplicity, but why do we not do the things that He commanded? Why are we so selfish and inhuman, both in our individual as well as in our community and national life? Why do we forget and flout Him as we do? Have you any answer? I haven't. And I do not think any answer can be given. When I think of the suffering that crowds the world to-day; of the unrest and mistrust and enmity and disruption that show themselves nearly everywhere, I marvel indeed. We are so cruel, notwithstanding His wonderful exhibition of kindliness and grace; we are so self-seeking, though He set us such a transcending example of self-forgetfulness. When He looks at the world to-day, I wonder if He does not think it very strange that we find it so hard to be like Him. Why is it so? Can you explain the world's hideous inconsistency? Can you explain Christian Civilization's un-Christ-likeness? When we call Him Lord why do we not do the things that He said? I fear none of us can find a satisfactory answer.

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The Saviour came. With trembling lips  
 He counted Europe's battleships.  
 "Yet millions lack their daily bread.  
 So much for Calvary," He said.

—NORMAN GALE

*Eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern.*

—2 Kings 18: 31

## ON BEING DIFFERENT

INDIVIDUALITY is a fine thing. There is no use your being like somebody else in everything you do and say and think; be yourself. But it doesn't do to make too much of a point of being different from other people. Being different just for the sake of it is no virtue. I remember a good neighbour, who prided himself not a little on the fact that he would never wear a necktie. It was against his religious scruples to so adorn himself. He wasn't any better than most of the other men in the community, but that empty collar of his always seemed to make him think that he was. But there is no religion, or irreligion either, in a necktie. To be different from some other people, quietly, intelligently and on some great principle, is fine; but to be different ostentatiously, and on some little, insignificant thing is pure folly and foolishness. Religion has often made men break away from the prevailing mode, but the point of departure has not always been wisely chosen. It is a great thing to know to put the emphasis just where it belongs, to be ordinary just where we ought to be, and to vary only where it is necessary and worth while.

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“And with joy the stars perform their shining,  
And the sea its long moon-silvered roll;  
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting  
All the fever of some differing soul.”

“Bounded by themselves, and unregardful  
In what state God's other works may be,  
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,  
These attain the mighty life you see.”

Oh, air-born voice! long since, severely clear,  
A cry like thine in my own voice I hear:  
“Resolve to be thyself; and know, that he,  
Who finds himself, loses his misery.”

—MATTHEW ARNOLD

*How much owest thou unto my Lord.*

—*Luke 16: 5*

## DEBIT AND CREDIT

THE world owes you something. It owes you an opportunity to make a good and an honest living for yourself and family. It owes you a clean city or town to live in. It owes you a church and a school, and numerous other institutions, through which you can find expression and development for the better and higher part of yourself. You have a right to claim and insist upon all these things. But all the time there is a contra account that you musn't forget. You owe the world something, and it is better perhaps that you be a little over-anxious about paying your debts than about getting your dues. While you are shouting for your rights you will probably be forgetting about your obligations. In the final analysis it is more important to you that you should pay the world what you owe it than that it should pay you its debts. Indeed it should be one of the most serious concerns of your life to see to it that you meet the obligations resting upon you as a man among men and a citizen of the world. Not to see your duty or obligation at all; to stumble through life carelessly and unattached, as if you didn't belong anywhere and had no special tasks to do or place to fill; to count getting and enjoying the be-all and end-all of life—surely that is selfish and dishonest beyond all decency. It is most important that you try to pay the world what you owe it.

---

God—let me be aware.  
 Let me not stumble blindly down the ways,  
 Just getting somehow safely through my days,  
 Not even groping for another hand,  
 Not even wondering why it all was planned,  
 Eyes to the ground unseeking for the light,  
 Soul never aching for a will-winged flight,  
 Please, keep me eager just to do my share.  
 God—let me be aware.

—MIRIAM TEICHNER

*Confess therefore your sins one to another.*

*—James 5: 16*

## ON FINDING FAULT

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BECAUSE you are able to point out, and do it quite cleverly too, real faults and short-comings in the life and actions of your friend or neighbor, is no sure proof that you are profitably or helpfully engaged when you are doing so. It may be, for instance, that he knows as much about them as you do, and is even more concerned for their elimination or correction than you can possibly be. You are not therefore helping him at all. And the chances are that you are not helping yourself greatly. For instance, I have found that the man who spends a great deal of time criticizing the morals or manners of others is almost sure to neglect his own to some extent. At best, that is the only explanation I have been able to find for the well-known fact that the most strenuous and persistent fault-finders usually have as many and as serious faults as ordinary people, with a few added. I have about concluded that to find fault with other people helpfully and without neglecting ourselves or getting into the bad habits of a fault-finder is one of the hardest things for any man to do. And the fault-finding habit is such a wearying thing to all those who have to put up with it that it ought to have completest justification before it is indulged in. And I am very sure indeed that there is generally a much surer and better way of helping the world than by finding fault with it. The trouble with some of us is that that better way is not quite so much to our liking as the other.

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Let me live in my house by the side of the road,

It's here the race of men go by—

They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are strong,

Wise, foolish—so am I.

Then why should I sit in the scorner's seat,

Or hurl the cynic's ban?

Let me live in my house by the side of the road

And be a friend to man,

—SAM WALTER FOSS



*They shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

—Isaiah 51: 11

## LIKE AS A FATHER

**A**CHILD crying over a broken toy is a pathetic sight. Who wouldn't be touched by it, and do what he could to remedy the situation at once! But we are all more or less children, and most of our toys are subject to tragedy. Indeed it is a sight very common along the way of life, to see people of all ages lamenting just such disasters. The child's toy seems pitifully childish and trifling to us; perhaps that is one of the reasons why those hot tears move us so. But to the child that trifling thing, for the moment, is the sun, moon and stars and all the universe thrown in. Some of the toys over which we older folk bend tear-stained eyes may not really be very much worth while either, but they seem very dear to us. I am sure that the Kind Father when He sees us sometimes does not laugh at our childishness, but is moved to pity at our great sense of loss. I have often thought that that is something like what the great after life will mean to some of us, we will get back some of the toys that we have lost and mourned, all mended and improved and beautiful. Perhaps it is hardly right to speak of these things whose loss has seemed so much to us as *toys*, but there again the child is our teacher, for the toy for the moment is all his world. I am sure God understands us as well as we understand the child. And I am sure He is as patient as He is understanding. And I am sure too, that He is planning to make good many of our great losses and disappointments in a most wonderful and unexpected way.

Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,  
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,  
By every cup of sorrow that you had,  
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright  
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep:  
Homer his sight, David his little lad.

—LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE



*Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.*

—Isaiah 7: 14

## IMMANUEL

157-3-1-  
1

“AND shall call his name Immanuel.” So runs the old legend. “God is with us.” That’s what His coming was to show. This is His world. He made it. He made it with a purpose and an end in view, a purpose and end that match up to who and what He is. He is here in intimate relation with the men and women, His children, in it. And that relation is a friendly, sympathetic, helpful one. His taking of the human form proves that beyond all question and cavil. And He is here to-day, just as He has always been here. He did not just come when Jesus came, and He did not go away when Jesus went away. Jesus came to show that He was here, that He always had been here, that it was His world, that He loved it, and that He would be in it and love it all the way through and to the very end. Before Jesus came men hadn’t understood. They didn’t know what kind of God He was; they caricatured and misinterpreted Him miserably, not intentionally, but because they didn’t know. But now that Jesus has come to explain and reveal, we ought not to make any mistake any more. We ought not to make that great mistake of imagining that He is not in the life and history of our day as He has always been in life and history, a God of infinite patience and goodness and love and grace. He is still, He always will be, the God who is with us.

I cannot think nor reason,  
I only know he came  
With hands and feet of healing  
And wild heart all aflame,

With eyes that dimmed and  
softened  
At all the things he saw,  
And in his pillared singing  
I read the marching law.

I only know he loves me,  
Enfolds and understands—  
And oh, his heart that holds me,  
And oh, his certain hands!

—WILLARD WATTLES

*A merry heart is a good medicine.*

—Proverbs 17: 22

## GOD REST YE, MERRY GENTLEMEN

16/ **M**ERRY is a good old-fashioned English word, probably of Celtic origin, and going back to the very beginning of our nation's life, and the quality which it suggests has played its part in many, many centuries of our history. Indeed, if that quality had been lacking, or less in evidence, the record of those years would probably have had a vastly different trend and tendency. And surely it is still a quality vital and worth while. Even long before our nation had its beginning, a Semitic sage set forth his philosophy, which, turned into our more tripping English tongue, said, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Not only among Celt and Saxon, therefore, but throughout our whole human history it has been proved good for men to turn their backs upon care and anxiety and just be light-hearted and glad. And somehow it has been the wisest among men who have best seen that the too-sober and solemn view of life and life's duties and problems has never proved the sanest or the best. Therefore when our friends wish us a "Merry Christmas" this year, let us take it as a challenge to measure up to the real, full meaning of the expression. We ought not to be afraid to be really merry. There is vitality and freshening and real virtue in light-heartedness. Solemnity has its place in life undoubtedly, but too much of it is not good, indeed a little of it ought to go quite a long way. Many of us, unfortunately, have much more of it than is wholesome.

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So let the way wind up the hill or down,  
 O'er rough or smooth, the journey will be joy;  
 Still seeking what I sought when but a boy,  
 New friendships, high endeavor, and a crown.  
 My heart will keep the courage of the quest,  
 And hope the road's last turn will be the best.

—HENRY VAN DYKE

*And the Lord repented that He had made Saul king over Israel.*

—1 Samuel 15: 35

## ON CHANGING ONE'S MIND

17/1/28

NEVER be afraid to change your mind, even about very important and critical things. To do so is sometimes held to be weakness, but the very opposite is the case. If a man is really thinking and growing from day to day, meeting new situations and facing new problems, he will have to change his thoughts about many things very often. To hold unchangingly on his way, and refuse to budge a bit from opinions and convictions once formed, notwithstanding new light and leading, is not strongmindedness at all but just stubbornness. To set such conduct forward as praiseworthy is to make a very great mistake. Consistency doesn't lie in always thinking the same about things, but in always thinking according to light and knowledge and without prejudice. The gift of omniscience hasn't been granted to any of us yet, and until it is, no one of us need ever expect to know enough about anything that he cannot learn a little more, and learning a little more about anything means a changing and modifying of the opinion regarding it. If your beliefs about God and the Christian faith are the same as they were forty years ago I am afraid it is nothing to be proud of. It either indicates that you haven't been doing any thinking all those years, or you have refused all new ideas that have come—either one about as big a calamity as could happen to you. One great trouble with many of us is that we are looking around for things to confirm us in our opinions rather than being on the lookout courageously for things that might compel us to change or modify them.

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Wisest is he, who, never quite secure,  
 Changes his thoughts for better day by day;  
 To-morrow some new light will shine, be sure,  
 And thou shalt see thy thought another way.

—ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN

*I lay down my life, that I may take it again.*

—John 10: 17

## THE SUPREME FOLLY

**S**ELFISHNESS is the supremest folly. The Greek word from which the English "idiot" is derived really means a private person, or one who lives to himself and within a very narrow circle of interests. There is a profound philosophy contained in the development of the meaning of the word. Living to oneself is not only negatively foolish but positively dwarfing and hurtful to both intellect and soul. It darkens the windows of one's life and shuts him up with that which is mean and little and unworthy. An idiot is one who cannot, because of his mental limitations, properly relate himself to the world of men and things around him. He lives his own narrow life behind cobwebbed windows. The man who wilfully does that is guilty of unpardonable folly. And the only escape from it is the broader and bigger interest; the wider relationship and concern that take in other people and duties other than those which centre around ourselves. No matter what a man's actual business or occupation or calling in life may be, that wider and fuller and more satisfactory way of life is always a possibility. And the wilful idiocy that shuts us out of it is surely unpardonable.

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What shall we do to fill our earthly span?  
 What Occupation stands first of them all?  
 The arts of life we might in order call,  
 All the professions we might closely scan;  
 But none of them is broad enough for man.  
 One thing, and one alone, is not too small  
 To offer actors on this earthly ball  
 A service that will fill the largest plan.  
 Life, Life itself! well spent from day to day,  
 Life vital, eager, active, wisely planned,  
 Unselfish life which gives itself away  
 For common good: this answers the demand,  
 And gives a challenge for which you and I  
 Should dare our utmost, yes, should do or die.

—A. R. THAIN

*Lay hold on the life eternal.*

—1 Timothy 6: 12

1937/25

## QUITE AS YOU MAKE IT

IT is all a good deal as you look at it. Or, if it is not that, it is as you make it. One man out of a given set of circumstances will get one thing, another out of exactly the same situation will get a thing altogether and fundamentally different. And yet we blame life for the difference, often. One man has a hard time of it, but he faces up to life courageously, overcomes his obstacles, masters hard situations, and makes good. Another under no worse circumstances drifts and shifts like a rudderless ship and gets nowhere. Perhaps you will say that it is in the one to do the one thing and in the other to do as he does, but that hardly seems to cover the situation. At any rate it is scarcely fair to blame circumstances for the difference. Life, the scheme of things, is not responsible for most of our difficulties and hardships; we are responsible. Of course that *we* often includes a number of people, and we ought to work together much more than we do to take life's handicaps and hardships out of the way; but in the end it comes back to this, that life for each man is very much as he sees and makes it. Loading life's responsibility off on other people is a very poor and a very unwise thing. It isn't quite fair to the facts; and then it never gets us anywhere. It is sounder and safer and much more honest to put the responsibility just where it belongs.

Have you found your life distasteful?  
 My life did and does smack sweet.  
 Was your youth of pleasure wasteful?  
 Mine I saved and hold complete.

Do your joys with age diminish?  
 When mine fail me I'll complain.  
 Must in death your daylight finish?  
 My sun sets to rise again.

—ROBERT BROWNING



*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil.*

—Jeremiah 29: 11

## THE WAY THAT IS BEST

23/12/25  
I SUPPOSE God has a purpose for every life. We have no fact of divine Providence and no orderly conception of the world at all unless that be true. And it must be that the purpose He cherishes for us is one altogether worth while. His thoughts toward us must be thoughts of good and not of evil. Nothing could be better for us, surely, than that His plans and purposes for us should be realized. Some people cherish an idea that God's plans for us are usually counter to the most of our human and natural plans for ourselves, but there is something pagan about such a notion. God doesn't forget that we are human beings, He is the Father of men, and He does not take any least pleasure in thwarting us or making our way hard or difficult in any particular. And yet we ought to admit that He is wiser than we, and that His way is more likely to be right than ours, where the ways differ. It will be safest and best for us always to remember that, and to give Him a chance to work out the things that are best. If we are in that mood, He will work away, usually quietly and peacefully, occasionally what seems to us harshly, but always for the best. If we set ourselves determinedly for our own plans, and insist that our way only is right, we can hardly expect but that there will be trouble and difficulty. God's way is so good that we ought never to resent or refuse it.

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Slowly by God's hand unfurled,  
Down around the weary world  
Falls the darkness; oh, how still  
Is the working of Thy will!  
Mighty Maker! Here am I,—  
Work in me as silently,  
Veil the days distracting sights,  
Show me heaven's eternal lights.

—WILLIAM HENRY FURNESS



*That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand.*

—Mark 4: 12

## MISSING THE MEANING OF IT

2 3/12/19

I HAVE been thinking again of the coming to earth of the Child of Bethlehem, and of what it has meant throughout the centuries. The theme is so great and wonderful that there is a danger that we simply marvel and miss some great practical lessons that we should lay closely to heart. He came not to make us wonder at the condescension of heaven but to teach us heaven's way for earth. He came to show us heaven's thought of our life and how it should be lived. He came to teach us what we never could have learned in any other way. We do well to be grateful for His coming, we do well to sing Christmas carols and hymns of praise, but are we learning the lessons, and are we really and truly trying to live them out from day to day? That is the only consistent way of showing our thankfulness, and wanting that way everything else is hollowness and mockery. For any reason at all to miss the meaning and the beauty of it—what a pity and a loss that would be! To let Christmas become just a common holiday and not a Day of Days—what a loss and a stupidity that would be! How much of its beauty and worth we shall miss if we ever allow it to degenerate into that! And yet there are some signs, if only a few, that that is exactly what some of us are doing.

The morn broke bright: the thronging people wore  
 Their best; but in the general face I saw  
 No touch of veneration or of awe.  
 Christ's natal day? 'Twas merely one day more  
 On which the mart agreed to close its door;  
 A lounging-time by usage and by law  
 Sanctioned; nor recked they, beyond this, one straw  
 Of any meaning which for man it bore.

—SIR WILLIAM WATSON

*As we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men.*

*—Galatians 6: 10*

## DO NOT MISS THE CHANCE

*23/12/26*  
**M**AKE use of the Christmas time at least for the exercise of the spirit of kindness and good will. Many are telling us just now that we have so overdone this holiday business that it has come to be more of a nuisance than anything else, but I do not believe them. It is still very much worth while, because it surprises so many people into being at least momentarily generous and thoughtful and unselfish who frequently forget to be so throughout much of the other portions of the year. Robert Louis Stevenson said that it was the history of our kindnesses that alone made the world tolerable, and the one splendid thing about Christmas time is that it adds so much to the sum total of that history. Of course, we ought to be kind and considerate throughout each month of the twelve, but who will say that we do not come nearer to being so because for a few weeks in the year the very atmosphere about us compels us to be measurably so? Margaret Deland advises us to use every chance we can possibly get of being kind, because some day there may not be any more chances. Let us take that good advice this very day. And let us take it with some abandon and enthusiasm. It will not hurt us at all to forget ourselves a little. It will not hurt at all to put enthusiasm into our kindness and self-forgetfulness as we have never done in all our lives before.

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If you have a song to sing  
Sing it now!  
Let the notes of gladness ring  
Clear as song of birds in  
spring!  
Every day some music bring!  
Sing it now!

If you have kind words to say  
Say them now!  
To-morrow may not come your  
way,  
Do your kindness while you may!  
Loved ones will not always  
stay—  
Love them now!

—C. M. SKINNER

*For God so loved the world, that He gave . . .*

—John 3: 16

## THE GRACE OF GIVING

WE surely need Christmas at least once a year, to bring home to us in its own wonderful and impressive way the great virtue and excellency of the grace of giving. Even the dullest and most self-centred of us cannot escape the gentle wooing of this season toward generosity and kindness, and the best and most unselfish among us are once in a while in need of its impelling ministry. The instinct to get and to keep has so much cultivation and opportunity for growth during the year that if we didn't have a Christmas season in which to learn over again the wonderful and exceeding joy of giving and spending we would be in a pitiable plight indeed, and life would be much harder and more unfeeling than it is. The best thing that Christmas can do for any one of us is to soften our hearts and make the doing of kindly and generous and self-forgetful things a little easier. And we who have lived through many Christmases and are still close-fisted and hard and unfeeling, have surely scorned and flouted divine ministries and shut the door in the face of God. Whatever else God's great gift to the world was intended to do, it certainly was planned to teach men the art of generous, glad, uncalculating giving, and if it hasn't done that it hasn't done much for them. The God who gave so ungrudgingly to us will have the return that pleases Him best when we have learned of Him and have caught his spirit.

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Love wakened jubilant. "Lo! now," quoth he,  
 "Has come again the time that sets me free  
 Too oft, too long, in human hearts I lie  
 Passive and pent, while humdrum days go by.  
 Now, scarce a heart will hold me prisoner;  
 For Christmas calls, 'Rise, Love and be astir.  
 Come forth, dear Love, now is the Christmas-tide!  
 And ever at that call, hearts open wide."

—EMILIE POULSSON

*Ye shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the Rock of Israel.*

—Isaiah 30: 29

## A SONG OF GLADNESS

LET us at least be glad and grateful on fair Christmas Day. There are so many voices calling us to that, that surely we cannot resist even if we would. For the Day itself, and what it has meant in our own little history, and what it means to-day in precious memory and inspiration, we ought to be generously and gladly grateful. For what it has meant to the world through all these centuries, a Day set unique in the midst of all other days, that compels men to think of little children and all simple, kindly human things—for that, how grateful we should be! And above all, how glad we should be when we think of it as the Day that brought God's love to the world, that forever killed that age-long libel that He was angry with us, that showed Him to us as a Father with an infinite, o'ermastering affection that nothing could limit! If we could only see and feel what a tremendous difference that revelation has made to everything, and how it has changed the whole complexion of our human life and filled it with a glory and a possibility undreamed of before, would not our Christmas song this year have a wonderful new joy and gladness in it? And that it ought to have. We have been missing quite too much of that note in our lives, and this very day would be a good time to inaugurate a change.

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I like to think that every house  
 Is full of cheer to-night;  
 That everywhere—on every hearth—  
 Warm fires are burning bright.  
 God give our homes the gift of cheer,  
 For no one ought to grieve  
 On such a happy night as this,—  
 On Christmas Eve!

HELEN COWLES LE CRON

*Then was our mouth filled with laughter, And our tongue with singing.*

—Psalm 126: 2

## THE OLD SONG

25

DO not let the cynic or the pessimist rob you of your Christmas joy, or of the strength and courage and hope that have always been born in you as you have thought of that coming of the Christ child. These are your right, and no man and no unhappy circumstance should ever take them quite from you. In the midst of all the sadness and the sorrow, all the blood and tears with which the world is filled, the angels' song of peace and good-will is not yet out of place or absolutely incongruous. It does not mock us; it does not speak of what may never be; it sounds forth God's programme for the world, and God's programme has always had a wonderful way of fulfilling itself. It looks to us now almost as if hate and selfishness and folly were going to check it utterly, but we know that they cannot. We can sing the old song, a little chastened in spirit perhaps, and yet with the old joy, the old hopefulness, the old triumphant faith that God was and is in Jesus Christ redeeming the world for infinitely better and higher and happier things. And as we sing we find it easier to believe and to reach up to the greatness of the faith that we profess. And as we sing the joy and gladness that He came to bring us should fill and flood all our souls.

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The earth has grown old with its burden of care,  
But at Christmas it always is young.  
The heart of the jewel burns lustrous and fair,  
And its soul full of music breaks forth on the air,  
When the song of the angels is sung.

It is coming, old earth, it is coming to-night!  
On the snowflakes which cover thy sod  
The feet of the Christ Child fall gentle and white,  
And the voice of the Christ Child tells out with delight,  
That mankind are the children of God.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN



*And ye would not.**—Isaiah 30: 15*

## MISSING THE BEST OF IT

28/12/25  
**W**HAT a tragedy it is for people to miss most of the good things of life! For a man to go through his days sour and ill-tempered and wretched when he might walk in the sun-light of his own and other people's happiness—what folly and crime that is! For a man to live dully and stupidly in the midst of a world that is crowded with so many interesting and fascinating and stimulating things and happenings and people—surely that is unpardonable folly. Yes, that is it, it is unpardonable folly, for no man needs to do it at all. No one is condemned to such a fate. The opportunities for life full of the things that are best are all about us, but the use of them depends upon ourselves. Our life is like a harp out of which beautiful music should come, but we can insist that it shall be dull and unresponsive, and we can insist that it jangle inharmoniously like bells out of tune. And, strange to say, that is just what many of us do. But the miss and the folly and the crime of it are surely plain to see. I guess that is the chief trouble, our unresponsiveness. We have eyes, but we do not see things—sunlight and stars and the glory of the morning and the needs and deeds of men about us. We have ears, but we do not hear all the rich music of life. We have souls, but we do not feel. What a pity and what a tragedy it is, especially when we can so easily avert it.

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I pray thee, spare me, Fate,  
 The woeful, wearying weight  
 Of a heart that feels no pain  
 At the sob of the autumn rain.  
 And takes no breath of glee  
 From the organ-surge of the sea,—  
 Of a mind where memory broods  
 Over songless solitudes—  
 I shall be satisfied  
 If only the dream abide.

—CLINTON SCOLLARD



*His compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Therefore will I hope in Him.*

—Lamentations 3: 22-24

## TURNING THE CORNER GRACEFULLY

WITH the coming of the New Year we turn upon a new stretch of life's road. The making of the turn is an incident of some importance, and ought to be done with some measure of propriety. We never could enter into the feelings of those who insisted on spending the last few hours of the old year in reckless revelry. And no more could we appreciate the spirit of those who seek to make such hours the time for sad reflections and gloomy forebodings. If the occasion demands anything special it demands, first, a spirit of gratitude, and then, a courageous, hopeful outlook for the future. When we come to look it squarely in the face about the worst that can be said about the past is that it was full of opportunities and undeserved blessings. It had some other things, it is true, but do not these stand out as great sunny spots as we look back to-day. And the future is likely to be much as the past has been. Surely it were graceful on our part to make the turn with a song of gratitude on our lips and a great courage and hope in our hearts.

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O who will walk a mile with me  
 Along life's merry way?  
 A comrade blithe and full of glee,  
 Who dares to laugh out loud and free,  
 And let his frolic fancy play,  
 Like a happy child, through the flowers gay  
 That fill the fields and fringe the way  
 Where he walks a mile with me.

O who will walk a mile with me  
 Along life's weary way?  
 A friend whose heart has eyes to see  
 The stars shine out o'er the darkening lea,  
 And the quiet rest at the end o' the day—  
 A friend who knows and dares to say  
 The brave, sweet words that cheer the way  
 Where he walks a mile with me.

—HENRY VAN DYKE

*And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.*

*—Revelation 21: 5*

## MAKING ALL THINGS NEW

387 10-15  
THE coming of the New Year always brings its suggestion of courage and of hope. I confess that, notwithstanding all the disappointments and failures and disillusionments of life, the New Year has never dawned yet without bringing to me a glorious and heartening sense of the possibility of a new and a better start in life. Even though I know that our divisions of time are somewhat artificial, and that the New Year is new only because we call it so; even though I know that it is not possible for any man to escape from the record and the result of the years that have gone, yet that picture of the boy sitting down to write before the clean, white page always seems a measurably true and unexaggerated picture of the opportunity God gives every man as the New Year dawns. It is a picture that ought to put into every man the strength, courage and determination that will enable him to link himself unto goodness in a new and vital way, and will actually make each New Year a finer achievement, and life itself a steady climbing up to God. And I am sure that we shall not make the future all this without that strength and courage and determination. We can put great things into the future of our lives, but we are the only ones who can do it.

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A Flower unblown; a Book unread,  
A Tree with fruit unharvested;  
A Path untrod; a House whose rooms  
Lack yet the heart's divine perfumes;  
A Landscape whose wide border lies  
In silent shade 'neath silent skies,  
A wondrous Fountain yet unsealed;  
A Casket with its gifts concealed—  
This is the Year that for you waits,  
Beyond To-morrow's mystic gates.

—H. N. POWERS

*So teach us to number our days, that we may get us an heart of wisdom.*

—Psalm 90: 12

## DON'T MISS THE OPPORTUNITY

31/12/25

**T**O-MORROW we step into a New Year. It is a great opportunity. The sun will rise and set in the same way, and life's duties will come and go much as they do to-day, and nothing will be very different or distinctive, and yet, we say, the dawning of a New Year is a great opportunity. It is our imagination—surely a God-given faculty—that helps to make it so. Nature and the bare facts of life do not show any difference between to-day and to-morrow, but something nevertheless does come to us to-day with a unique and a specially hopeful message. It is the wonderful, helpful and alluring inspiration that comes from the thought of a new start. We cannot absolutely begin all over again; the stern experiences of the days to come will soon show us we cannot. Yet in a sense we can, and the sense in which we can does mean a great opportunity. We can use that opportunity so that it will not too cruelly disappoint us in the end. We can really begin to be the better thing that our imagination pictures to us to-day. Yes, and who may say to what that beginning may lead us? We oughtn't to miss this opportunity. Indeed we ought to lay ourselves out in the most positive and emphatic way not to miss it. It is just possible that we may never have many better ones. And I am sure that missing good opportunities is often a very serious matter.

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A new prayer for the New Year,  
In mercy, heavenly Father, hear.  
The former things are passed away,  
Make all things new for thy great day.  
Give us the best thou hast to give,  
By which alone we still may live—  
A new heart and a new birth  
For a new heaven and a new earth.

—ESTELLE M. HURLL













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